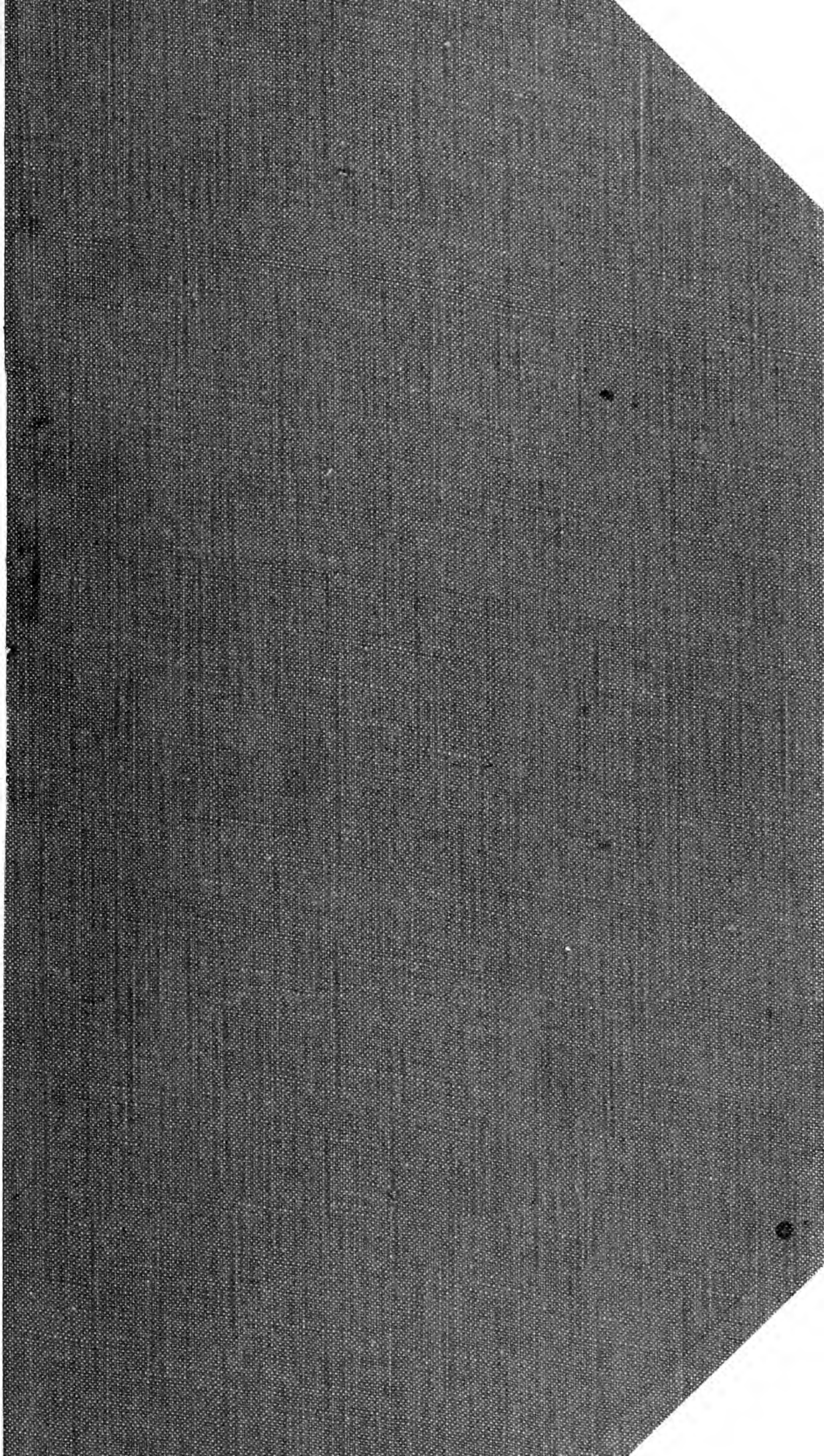

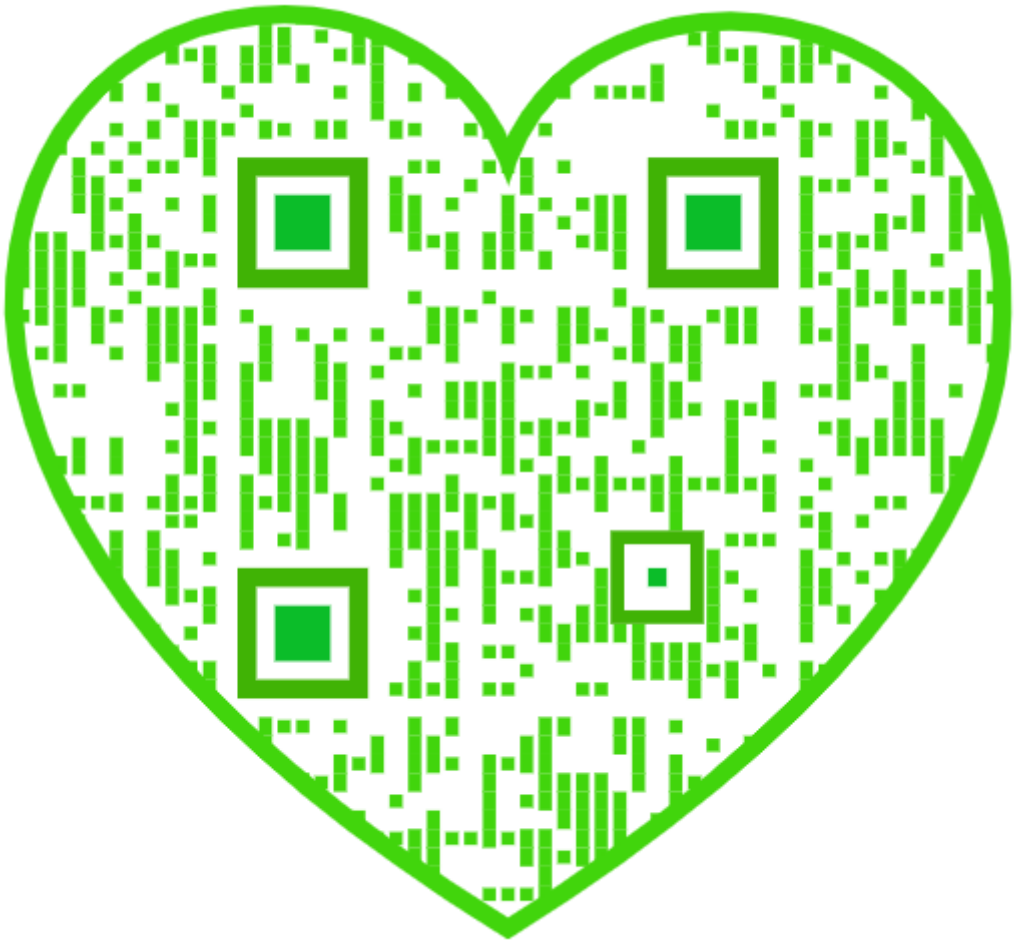

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PLATE I. FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER NISHIMURA SHIGÉNAGA (C. 1725).

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JAPANESE WOOD ENGRAVINGS

THEIR HISTORY, TECHNIQUE AND CHARACTERISTICS

By

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"The Pictorial Arts of Japan," &c.

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JAPANESE WOOD ENGRAVINGS

It would be hard to overestimate the debt which the world owes to the wood engraver. For upwards of a thousand years he has done for the great Turanian races what the type-founder and compositor have done for Europe during the last five centuries; and, throughout the civilised world, he has brought art as a means of pleasure and instruction before the eyes and understanding of millions of all sorts and conditions of men. It is sad to think that his labours at last are nearly ended, superseded by processes that modern science has placed within our reach and in which his trained eye and clever hands can take no part; but his share in our past progress will always be remembered with gratitude, and his works will be guarded amongst the choicest treasures of the museums and libraries of the future.

The art of the wood engraver had its birth in China, spreading thence to the nations which owe their ancient civilisation to the great Middle Kingdom; and it was not until centuries after the Chinese, the Koreans and the Japanese had mastered the technique of xylography that we in Europe adapted the art to our own needs.

Any history of wood engraving that excludes the development of the processes in the Far East is more incomplete than a history of glyptic art that ignores Egyptian and Assyrian sculpture, because the sculpture of Egypt and Assyria is a thing of the remote past, while Chinese and Japanese wood engraving still remains to us, for a little while at least, as a living art. And yet although few branches of art have been the object of more painstaking and appreciative research in Europe than

xylography, its Oriental manifestations, past or present, even for the professed student of the subject, have but the most nebulous kind of existence, and the reason is not far to seek. It is only within recent years that the antiquity and characteristics of the woodcuts of China and Japan have received any attention from Sinologists and Japanologists, and even at the present time the material available for the historian is far from complete. There is, however, enough to supply indisputable proof of two facts: that these two countries, with Korea as a third, were our xylographic precursors; and that Japanese engraving has certain qualities which may convey useful lessons to ourselves. It is indeed probable that in a professional sense the wood engravers of China or Japan may claim a direct ancestral relation to those of the western world. Be this as it may, the story of the progress and practice of Turanian xylography is a missing chapter in the history of the art.

The outline now offered deals mainly with Japan, but a study of the early history of almost every Japanese art or art industry leads us back inevitably to China, either directly or through the intermediation of Korea, and the art of the wood engraver forms no exception to the rule. It is unfortunate, however, that the historical data as to its origin in the older nations are still very scanty, but it is desirable to give them the first place.

Pictorial Engraving in China.

The history of block-printing and that of pictorial engraving are necessarily linked together, for, given a pictorial art as well as a literature in a nation that has just brought into use the art of printing from engraved blocks, a picture would be executed as readily as a letter or ideographic character, and would be cut on the wood whenever the need of such an illustration of the text might chance to suggest itself. Now, it has long been known that printing from engraved blocks was employed in China at least as early as the sixth century of our era,[1] and the processes then invented were identical with those practised by the

[1] See the Guide to the Chinese and Japanese typographical and illustrated books exhibited in the King's Library of the British Museum in 1887, by Professor Robert K. Douglas.

PLATE 2. FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER SUZUKI HARUNOBU (C. 1765).

Japanese and Chinese in the present day. Mr. Satow[1] has shown how quickly the advantages of the art were realised by the Japanese, and has presented to the British Museum copies of a Buddhist Dharâni printed in Japan before the end of the eighth century, and there is reason to assume also that the Koreans, through whom Japan has derived so many of the Chinese arts and sciences, had become possessed of the same knowledge some time before her insular neighbours.

Although we may infer that pictorial engraving on wood was contemporary, or nearly so, with block-printing, there is no evidence to prove the fact. The great edition of the Chinese classics printed in the tenth century contained no illustrations, and the oldest pictorial wood engravings now in existence date only from A.D. 1331. These appear as illustrations to a Buddhist Sutra treating of the Saving Grace of the Goddess Kwanyin, exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1888, and the carefully cut pictures, one of which is reproduced in Fig. 1, prove their engraver to have been no 'prentice hand. Curiously enough, the Chinese, although great makers of illustrated books in later centuries, do not seem to have ever gone beyond this early work in skill of execution. The majority of their cuts indeed are much inferior to it, and even the two famous volumes published in 1796 which represent their *dernier mot* in pictorial engraving are scarcely superior to it in technique. The works in question, descriptive of the cultivation of rice and the manufacture of silk, are extremely rare, but a photographic reproduction of both, as well as a careful copy by a Japanese engraver, are to be seen in the British Museum.

As a rule Chinese woodcuts are characterised by an angularity that contrasts strongly with the flowing graceful lines of the Japanese engraving, and there is never any of the effective use of masses of black that appears in the engravings of the eighteenth century in Japan. This inferiority on the part of the Chinese is perhaps attributable rather to the draughtsman than to the engraver, and indicates that the cause of book illustration has offered less attraction to the artists of the older country than to those of the later.

The art of polychromatic engraving by the use of a series of wood-

[1] "On Japanese Printing," by Ernest Satow. *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. x.

blocks was known to the Chinese in the seventeenth century, and probably much earlier. An excellent example, dated 1701, an album of Birds and Flowers (*Ling mao hwa hwui*) in the collection of Mr. W. C.

Fig. 1.—*Reduced facsimile of a woodcut in the Kwanyin Sutra. Dated* 1331. (*Author's Collection.*)

Alexander, was shown at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1889. This work was imitated a few decades later by the Japanese engraver Yamamoto Kihei (1748), and the copy appears to be the first book with colour-printed illustrations published in Japan.

Pictorial Engraving in Korea.

The Koreans, who appear to have drawn their civilisation direct from China, were able to second the Middle Kingdom in conveying instruction to Japan ; for numbers of Korean priests, artists, and men of learning are referred to in the early Japanese records as having settled in the country, and the traditions with respect to a painter named Kawanari, who lived in the ninth century, are of much interest. That they practised the art of printing from an early date, not only from engraved wood blocks, but also from movable metal types, has been shown by the researches of Mr. W. G. Aston, whose paper on the subject will shortly appear in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society ;* and an illustrated volume entitled *Sam-Kang-hèng-sil*, bearing the date of 1481, forms a part of the collection in the British Museum. In the cut reproduced in Fig. 2 it will be seen that the work is less skilful than that of the *Kwanyin Sutra*, but the technique seems identical with that of the older Japanese blocks. The later engravings of the Koreans do not appear to have been any better, and there is no reason to believe they ever attained any remarkable proficiency in the art.

Pictorial Engraving in Japan.

The date of the earliest pictorial engraving in Japan cannot yet be fixed. The first examples were probably executed within the precincts of certain Buddhist temples, where in old times the custom prevailed of printing copies of Sutras for the use of the priesthood and lay devotees. Some of these institutions were also wont to issue slips of paper bearing characters or figures of divinities as mementos to pilgrims who visited the shrines, and a number of pictorial slips of the kind are still in existence, some of which are signed with the names of famous priests of the seventh, eighth, and later centuries. One in the British Museum is ascribed to the famous Abbot Kukai, better known by his posthumous title of Kōbō Daishi (b. 779, d. 835) ; but this, like most of the others, can hardly be accepted as genuine. Many, in fact, are undoubtedly of modern manufacture, and were designed merely to stimulate the

fervour and liberality of devotees, to whom impressions were presented in response to a suitable offering ; but there is an engraved plank of willow wood still preserved at a temple in Shibamata which has a

Fig. 2. — Reduced facsimile of a Korean woodcut in the Sam-Kang-hèng-sil, 1481. (*Author's Collection.*)

reputation of a less assailable kind. It is attributed to the great priest Nichiren (1222-1282), the founder of an important sect of Buddhists, and is evidently the work of an amateur more skilled in the formation of

Chinese characters than in the delineation of the human frame, as the reduced copy in Fig. 3 will show. Mr. Satow (*loc. cit.*) refers to other blocks which go back even as far as the beginning of the twelfth century ;

Fig. 3.—Reduced facsimile of a wood engraving, attributed to the Buddhist priest Nichiren (1222–1282). (*Author's Collection.*)

but perhaps the most satisfactory are the series, one of which is reproduced in Fig. 4, signed by a priest named Riokin, and dated 1325, six years before the publication of the Chinese *Kwanyin Sutra*, and nearly a century

earlier than the German block of St. Christopher. The cut is of large size (the figure about 18 inches in height), and may be accepted as a fair example of the work of the priestly xylographer.

Fig. 4.—Agni Dêva, the Fire Divinity. Reduced facsimile of a woodcut, dated in the 2nd year of Shōchiū (1325). Engraved by a priest named Riokin. (Author's Collection.)

The history of Japanese wood engraving may be tentatively divided into six periods, an abstract summary of which is given on page 76.

First Period.

The First or Initial Period is a long term probably extending from the commencement of block-printing, but certainly not later than the fourteenth century, to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The work of the pictorial engraver was apparently confined throughout to the Buddhist woodcuts already mentioned, for although many block books were printed in the temples, none of these are known to bear illustrations. Further researches may however be rewarded by the discovery of facts that will necessitate material alteration in the dates of our periods.

The art, so far, was in its rudiments, for none of the pictorial efforts preserved to us call for higher ability than that exercised by the ordinary engravers of the Buddhist texts; and although chronologically the Japanese were in advance of the German and Flemish engravers by several centuries, technically they went little beyond the level of the archaic St. Christopher of 1423, and in no respect approached the powerful work of Dürer and his contemporaries of the sixteenth century. The pictorial engraver appears to have confined his labours to religious leaflets, and although he lived within touch of the masterpieces of the great Buddhist painters he manifested no ambition to reach artistic completeness.

Second Period.

The Second Period begins about 1608, with the appearance of the first illustrated book, and ends about 1680 with the advent of Hishigawa Moronobu, the father of artistic xylography in Japan. Technically it was scarcely in advance of the term just described, but it was rendered significant by the effort to popularise printed literature through the introduction of pictorial embellishments.

The earliest illustrated book at present known is the *Isé Monogatari*, two copies of which are in the British Museum collection. The first edition of this was printed in 1608 and a second edition with some alterations in 1610, and we may infer that it was a work of some pretensions, from the profusion of the pictorial illustrations and from the quality of the paper on which it was printed. The illustrations, which are cut with only moderate skill and show no special artistic resource, are in the Yamato or native style, and repeat all the conventions of the school, even to the introduction of the fictitious clouds that were devised in the first instance with purely decorative intention in the painting of screens and pictorial rolls. Fig. 5 is a fair example of the work. The *Isé Monogatari* was followed by a number of other publications of a semi-historical character, amongst which was the *Hogen Monogatari* (British Museum Collection), dated 1626, containing illustrations in the Yamato style, but much more roughly cut than those of the earlier volumes, and distinguished by the application of a coarse hand-colouring not unlike that of the old English chap-books. The use of hand-colour-

ing as applied to book-pictures doubtless arose from the wish of the publisher to increase the attractions of the issue in the eyes of a public

Fig. 5.—Reduced from a woodcut in the Isé Monogatari (1608). (*Author's Collection.*)

who had not yet learned to appreciate the advantages of the press. The pigments, however, were garish and ill applied, and only rendered more

conspicuous the deficiencies of the engraver. It was not until the middle of the next century the use of colour in printing became at all worthy of a people so richly gifted with the colour sense.

A somewhat later work in the same collection is the *Jokio hiden* (1629), a pictorial mirror of instruction for girls. It shows no advance upon the *Hogen Monogatari*, and is of interest only as the first of the series of moral stories for the guidance of the young, that afterwards had considerable vogue. Illustrated volumes of this type were issued in considerable numbers; and the cheap pictorial novelette, the *Kusa-zoshi*, of which more will be said, made its first appearance about the middle of the seventeenth century.

As a whole this second period was not one of great achievement in wood engraving. The cuts in the *Isé Monogatari* and its successors were inferior to the contemporary work in Europe, and not in advance of that of China and Korea; but the publication of printed and illustrated books on subjects of popular interest was a movement full of promise—a promise that was well realised in after years.

Third Period.

The Third Period, extending from 1680 to 1710, was essentially that of artistic book illustration, and the hero of this term was a dyer's draughtsman, afterwards a noted painter, named Hishigawa Moronobu. It is he who must be regarded as the important figure in the new popular school of pictorial art, for although the reputed founder of the "Passing World" pictures (*Ukiyo-yé*), the painter Iwasa Matahei, had some decades before set the example of abandoning the worn-out classical themes, in favour of representations of the life and customs of his time, it was only through the engraver that the new departure could be brought adequately before the eyes of the masses. It was Moronobu who first showed the possibilities of book illustration, and developed the series of albums or collection of pictures, which under Nishigawa Sukénobu, Tachibana Morikuni, Hokusai, and others were to play such an important part in educating the public eye and mind. He also illustrated novels, topographical works, poems, and other classes of literature; but it was in revealing how faithfully and boldly the work of

the artist's pencil could be transferred to wood, that he did most for his countrymen. We do not know who were his engravers, but it is probable that they worked under his immediate supervision, and it is even possible that some of his pictures were cut by his own hand. Nothing could be better in its way than the sketch in Fig. 6. Here are the flowing line of the artist's brush, the free and vivid rendering of action, and the

Fig. 6.—From an engraving after Hishigawa Moronobu (*c.* 1680). (*Author's Collection.*)

decorative use of masses of black that have recently inspired a new school of imitators in our own country. The woodcut was for the first time made representative of the art it reproduced.

Moronobu's books in the British Museum Collection include copies of famous pictures, drawings of landscapes and street scenes, illustrated stories, incidents of history, poetry, and in fact almost everything with which we are familiar in the works of later and better known men.[1] He did

[1] A list of the principal engraved works of this artist will be found, together with the first account of his labours, in the Catalogue of the Japanese and Chinese pictures in the British Museum.

not take advantage of colour block engraving, although the process had become known before his death, but some of his volumes were admirably coloured by hand, and in a style that recalls the manner of the artist in his original sketches. It is probable that it was the success of these painted books that led to the adoption of colour printing by Torii Kiyonobu and his successors a generation later. His principal works appeared between 1680 and 1701; but he lived many years after the latter date, and died about 1714 at the age of sixty-seven.

The name of Hishigawa Moronobu was adopted by a successor who imitated his style of painting, and the names of several other followers are recorded, but we know nothing of their work. There were, however, many unsigned book illustrations bearing traces of the manner of Moronobu published about the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, and it may be assumed that they issued from his school.

Although Moronobu was the leader of the new departure, there was one later contemporary artist who took an independent and important part in the establishment of artistic book illustration. This was Okumura Masanobu, a less vigorous and original designer than the master, but one of high capacity. Like Moronobu he made a speciality of the *E-hon*, or picture-book pure and simple—albums of pictures without any pretence of text beyond a short marginal script—and he was the author of many admirable pictorial broadsides (known in Japan as *ìchimai-yé*, or "single-sheet sketches"). He, indeed, may be said to have done for the broadside what Moronobu did for the book, for his work in this direction appears to have preceded that of the Toriis, the great broadside artists of the eighteenth century. There are three of his books in the British Museum Collection, and a broadside representing a figure of a young girl, drawn with a beauty of line that rivals the best of the work of his follower Nishigawa Sukénobu. The sheet in question is coloured by hand for sale, but some of the later prints published in concurrence with those of Torii Kiyonobu about 1710 have been struck off from two blocks, one in black, the other in tint. Fig. 7 is a good example of his manner.

Finally, two other names deserve mention—those of Haségawa Tōün and Ishikawa Riusen. The former is represented by the illustrations to

the *E-hon Hōkan*, published in 1688, a well-known collection of legends; the latter by the *Yamato kosaku gwasho*, an annual of Japanese customs, issued about the same date. The engravings in these are no better than those of the foregoing period, but the books are of interest as the earliest of two classes which were afterwards to be developed in a signal

Fig. 7.—The Three Saké Tasters, a burlesque on an old picture, called "The Three Religions." From an engraving after Okumura Masanobu (c. 1710). (Author's Collection.)

degree by the more able hands of Tachibana Morikuni and Haségawa Settan.

In the same period were printed a number of panoramic views of famous places, engraved on wood in a somewhat coarse style, and folded in such a way as to be capable of taking the shape of a book that could be reopened when necessary into a long continuous sheet. It was probably a convenient adaptation of the *makimono*, or roll, and may have preceded the bound volume in date. This form, called *Orihon*

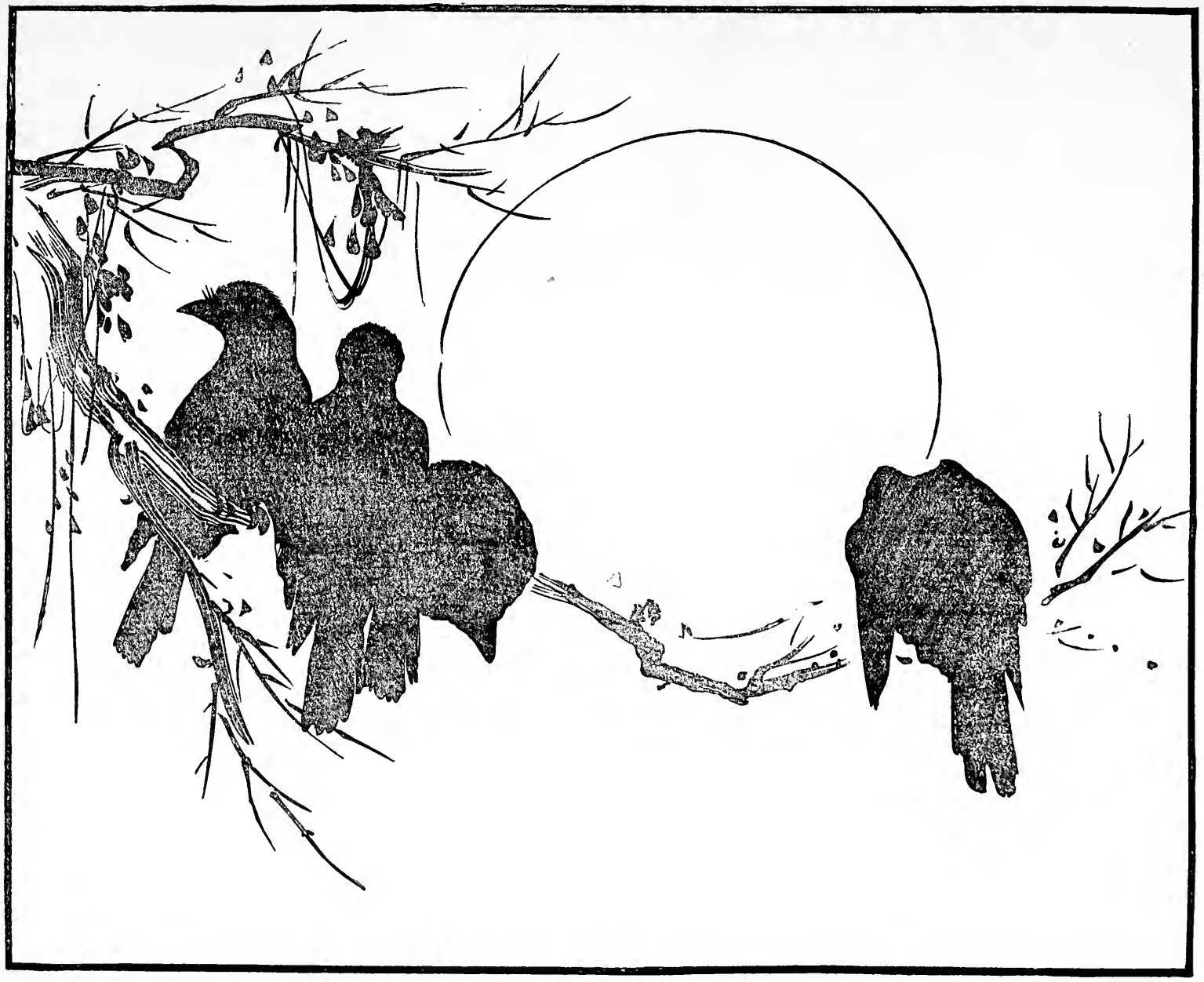


Fig. 8.—*Crows in the Moonlight. From an engraving after Kórin in the Gwa-shi Kwai-yo* (1707).

or praying-book, from the folding of the leaves like hands in supplication, is exemplified in England by the long pictures of the Lord Mayor's Show that are still hawked in the streets on the day of the procession. A typical specimen of the *Orihon* panoramas, published in 1689, representing Itsukushima and its neighbourhood, may be seen in the British Museum ; with two other interesting works of the period, the *Kwaraku Saiken dzu*, by a pupil of the Hishigawa school, a forerunner of the topographical handbooks of a century later, containing views of the neighbourhood of Kyoto, and the *Tokiwa gi* (1700), a series of patterns for stamped and brocaded robes for women, perhaps the first of the many engraved collections of industrial designs published specially for the use of the artisan.

The popular school was served materially during the latter part of the seventeenth century by three painters who did not seek the aid of the engraver for the diffusion of their works. These were Honnami Kōrin (1660–1716), a great lacquer-painter and a bold and original decorative designer, who left a powerful impression upon the industrial art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ; Hanabusa Itchō (1651–1724), a remarkable inventive genius with a dangerously keen sense of humour that secured him some years of exile ; and Miyagawa Chōshun, an associate of Hishigawa Moronobu. The drawings of Kōrin were collected, and woodcut copies were published in album form in the present century by his famous follower, Hōitsu, but only two or three of his works were engraved during his lifetime (Fig. 8). Those of Itchō were reproduced under the direction of his followers in the second half of the eighteenth century (Fig. 9) ; but the memory of Chōshun, whose pictures are well worthy of preservation, failed to receive the same honour.

The existing examples of the Hishigawa period are not numerous, but they are very precious to the student of Japanese woodcuts because they foreshadow in almost every direction the remarkable set of works that were to come in later times, works that will be of constantly growing interest and value to the Japanese *littérateur* who in future years will have to recall to his countrymen the common phases of the picturesque existence which is now so rapidly drawing to a close.

Fig. 9.—The Menaicant Priest and the Wild Geese, after Hanabusa Itchō. From the Itchō gwa-fu (1770).

Fourth Period.

The Fourth Period, extending from about 1710 to 1828, was both the longest and the most representative of the terms into which the progress of xylography may be divided. In this time the technical details of the art were perfected; colour-printing rose from its first and simplest processes to the highest point of achievement; and a wealth of admirable book and broadside illustrations was produced that rendered incalculable service to industrial art as well as to knowledge in nearly all its branches, and ministered largely to the healthy amusement of a people who are as thorough and hearty in their play as in their work.

As the period was especially characterised by the development of chromoxylography, the history of this branch of engraving may be considered first.

Chromoxylography in the Fourth Period.

The Japanese lay no claim to the invention of colour-printing as a process of wood engraving. Not only were they anticipated by the Chinese, from whom they doubtless took their first lessons, but the sixteenth century *camaieu* prints of Italy and Germany were practically identical in manner of execution, and displayed technical merit equal to that of the best Japanese engravings; but nothing yet seen in Chinese or European chromoxylography bears any comparison in point of beauty with the low-priced broadsides of Japan in the last half of the eighteenth century. If the Japanese were not the originators of this art, they were by far its best exponents.

The exact date of the earliest chromoxylographic prints still remains open to doubt; but it is certain that the Chinese preceded Japan in this as in so many other sections of art. The first application of the process in Japan is said to have been by one Idzumiya Gonshiro, who lived at the end of the seventeenth century, and made use of a second block to stamp certain parts of his design with *béni*, a red colour extracted from a kind of safflower; and Mr. Satow, quoting from an author named Sakakibara, refers to the printing in colours of a portrait of Ichikawa Danjiuro, the histrionic ancestor of the present leader of the Japanese stage, for sale in the Yedo streets in 1695. None of these

PLATE 3. ACTOR IN FEMALE RÔLE.

FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER KATSUGAWA SHUNSHŌ (C. 1780).

early specimens are in existence, and it may be doubted whether the so-called colour prints were not ordinary prints from a single block coloured by hand, after the manner of the *Hogen Monogatari* and the books of Hishigawa Moronobu, to which reference has already been made. The point is not of great moment, for although it is very probable that a few rude efforts were made at the time mentioned, it was not until about 1710 that the process assumed any artistic or industrial importance. It was then that an artist of the artisan class named Torii Kiyonobu, whose name must be set side by side with that of Hishigawa Moronobu in a place of honour, began to supply portraits of famous actors and pictures of various subjects of interest to the theatre-goer of Yedo, which were engraved upon three blocks and printed in black, pale green or blue, and pale pink ; and originated a phase of popular art that took a special place in the favour of the people, and was destined to undergo great development.

Torii Kiyonobu must be regarded as the founder of the theatrical school of popular art, for no theatrical broadsides of artistic value are known to have been issued before his time. He was moreover a designer of playbills and of illustrations for the quaint little novelettes called *Kusa-zoshi* (see page 49), which were published in considerable numbers about the same time, and he is said to have been the inventor of the style of stage scenery still in vogue in the theatres of Tokyo and Kyoto. Few of the prints bearing his name have been preserved, but these are sufficient to show that he was an artist of great ability, and that his works were the model which governed the manner of the broadsheet designer of the next two generations, and influenced the whole of his successors down to the present day. He was born in 1688, and his work appears to have extended from about 1710 to about 1730, but the date of his death is unknown. One of his sheets, printed from two blocks only, was exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1888, together with a novelette bearing his signature. The former gave a very favourable impression of his power.

The broadside artists did not confine their attention to the theatre. In addition to portraits of actors and scenes of theatre, subjects of all kinds were treated in single sheet pictures. Portraits of wrestlers and of well-known personages of the courtesan class, pictures of women and

Fig. 10.—*From a woodcut after Tachibana Morikuni.*

Engraved in the Ehon Shaho bukuro (1720).

children engaged in various occupations and amusements, street scenes, illustrations of moral anecdotes, history and folk lore, architecture and landscape, were all represented in our collections of early colour prints, but it was the theatres which drew forth the most ambitious efforts of Kiyonobu and his successors. Portraiture, indeed, was almost confined to the theatrical artists, for although some admirable and characteristic transcripts of the features of famous priests of bygone times have been handed down to us by the temple wood-carvers, there is scarcely anything deserving the name of portraiture in painting, and no example of it even in the works of the prolific *nétsuké* carver. It is said that the figures of the actors depicted in the sheets really gave accurate impressions of the stage faces of the men who were so well known by almost every one of the populace in the great towns, but little was left to speculation, since the name of the person represented is always writ large upon the print. Were it not for this there are but few of the countenances, and those, too, only on account of the exaggeration of certain traits, that convey any impression of individuality to the foreigner. The dramatic rendering of action in the figure, however, is often magnificent, though sometimes extravagant, and in artistic strength of line many of the representations are unsurpassable.

The popularity of these sheets is easy to understand. The plebeian stage, which must be carefully distinguished from the classical *Bugaku* and *No* performances that appealed only to the culture of the patrician, was the most exciting and most delightful of the amusements of the hard-working and contented traders and artisans that made up the bulk of the population of the towns. A play too was not a thing to be disposed of in two or three hours, but a serious performance that went on from morning till night before an audience collected in friendly or family parties grouped in little square enclosures fronting the stage, and prepared to spend their whole day in enjoying the pathetic or comic impersonations of their favourites who trod the boards. The position of the Japanese actor (there were no actresses on the orthodox stage) was a peculiar and somewhat anomalous one. His professional fame might assume the widest proportions, his name might became a household word, and his features be as familiar and welcome as those of a brother for the masses from which his audience was exclusively drawn, but socially he was almost a pariah. The

townsmen whose passions and sentiments he could sway at will, and upon whose memory he engraved the noblest traditions of the past might regret his death or retirement as a public calamity, but there were few of them who would not have regarded any family alliance with him otherwise than as a degradation. As for the military class and nobles, every man of gentle birth who respected himself and his order, either avoided the theatre or yielded to the indulgence in secret. The player then was necessarily compelled to look for artistic service to a caste nearer his own than

FIG. 11.—*Girls Sketching. From a wood engraving after Nishigawa Sukénobu in the É-hon Tama Kadzura* (1736).

were the painters of the aristocratic Tosa and Kano Academies, and he proved a tempting subject for the new set of artisan designers; for although a few artists of the popular school consistently avoided stage subjects, there were many, and of the most able, who were ready to devote their best energy and talents to the perpetuation of the features of the Garricks and Listons of their day.

The broadside designers also devoted some attention to the wrestler, who was a favourite caterer for the amusement of the public, but their

training in the traditional art canons had rendered them unfit to appreciate the grand display of muscular force, that often revealed itself beneath the hide of the athlete, and as they could make nothing of the heavy features and elephantine limbs of their model, the few studies of the wrestling arena that have reached us have little attraction for the art collector. This failure on the part of the artist to render a subject that might have appealed strongly to his European *confrère*, is an interesting contradiction of the theory that the magnificent creations of the sculptors of ancient Greece were inspired by the opportunities that these great artists had of studying the nude form. The Japanese artist had at least equal facilities and many worthy subjects, but not one of the men who in certain directions showed so perfect and instructive an appreciation for beauty of line, has ever made a serious effort to do justice to the matchless curves of the human figure.

It is, perhaps, in sketches of women that the popular artist was at his best. Not that he was naturalistic in his treatment. Nothing, indeed, that he did was more conventional, but his conventions were happy ones, and the result charming. Fortunately for his artistic limitations the long outer robe concealing the limbs of his subject delivered him from much faulty drawing ; while the calligraphic training acquired from childhood in the writing school gave him a remarkable power of rendering the sweeping folds of drapery ; and the play of colour and choice of ornament permitted by the fashion of the robe and sash brought into use all the lessons in design and harmony that he had learned from the works of the old masters of the classical schools. The gorgeously-attired women that form so conspicuous an element in the decoration of the modern fan, as well as the less extravagant and more attractive personages in the colour prints of Katsugawa Shunshō, Yeishi, and Utagawa Toyokuni are pure conventions, that bear scarcely any resemblance to the real Japanese maiden either in features, form, or proportions ; but they are often very beautiful as an exercise of drawing, even in the works of Harunobu and Utamaro, in which mannerism is carried altogether beyond the rights of artistic license. Hokusai, too, had his conventions, but he was nearer to the truth than most of his predecessors (Fig. 23). On the other hand, the engravings after Kikuchi Yōsai, a man of *Samurai* lineage, show a dignity and refinement in feminine portraiture that had never been

Fig. 12.—*From a woodcut after a picture by Muh Ki* (*a Chinese artist of the* 12*th century*). *Engraved in the Ehon té-kagami* (1720).

attained by the artists of the *Ukiyo yé*, but these, too, were ideal creations (Fig. 29). In fact, although the representations of women will always be found the most pleasing specimens in a collection of Japanese prints, they are not the women of Japan or of any other country, but of the artist's imagination.

Landscape, birds, and flowers, the favourite subjects of the painter, appeared but little in the broadsides of the last century. It was Hokusai who set the example in landscape, in his large views of Fuji, which were published at the beginning of the present century ; and Hiroshigé, many years later, made a speciality of serial issues of *ichimai-yé* recording the beautiful scenery of his native country ; but the Toriis and Katsugawas, the fathers of artistic chromoxylography, left this section of art untouched.

The Japanese broadsides were published in sheets, one giving the whole of the subject, or forming only a segment of the complete picture. Most commonly three sheets were required to make up the scene depicted, but sometimes the number rose to four or five. The purchaser usually had these mounted and preserved in books or rolls.

The art of colour-printing was not confined to the production of theatrical and other broadsides. It was also used in the illustration of books, and in the decoration of New Year's cards (*surimono*), fans, umbrellas, and letter-paper, as well as for many other purposes ; but the greatest variety was to be found in the *ichimai-yé*, although the book and the New Year's card often displayed more evidence of care in technical details.

The *surimono* or New Year's cards, which came into fashion in Yedo in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, are gems of chromoxylography, and display the technical resources of the engraver at their best. They are usually of quarto or octavo size, printed with great care on thick creamy paper, adorned with designs by well-known artists of the popular school, and bearing some little conceit in the form of a verselet or proverb. The best period is between 1800 and 1840.

Chromoxylography after Kiyonobu was carried on by men of the same school, including Kiyomasu, Kiyomitsu, Kiyotané, Kiyoshigé, Nishimura Shigenaga (Plate 1), and Ishikawa Toyonobu down to about 1765, when, under Suzuki Harunobu (Plate 2) and Torii

Kiyonaga, it reached its highest point. With Kiyonaga was associated Kiyotsuné, a less successful disciple of the school, and the Torii line closed near the end of the century with Kiyominé. The

Fig. 13.—*A Chinese Sage. Engraved from a sketch by Kano Tanyu in the Gwa-ko sen-ran* (1740).

blocks employed in printing were gradually increased in number to seven, and, although in later times as many as thirty printings were required to complete a picture, the added complexity of the process appeared only to

destroy the simple charm seen in the prints of the Toriis and Katsugawas, and the best results were gained when the number did not exceed that used by Kiyonaga and Harunobu. The colours under these artists had become remarkably tender and harmonious, the technique of the printing had advanced, and the drawing still preserved the qualities displayed by Kiyonobu, and gained something in style. So far, gradations in printing, afterwards employed with good effect, were not used ; but an uninked pressure block was sometimes brought into service either to give a damask surface to white drapery, or to produce an effect like that of *impasto* in the representation of the petals of a flower or the feathers of a bird, or for some similar purpose.

From about 1770 arose a new line, that of the Katsugawas. Its founder, Katsugawa Shunshō, deserves to be ranked with Torii Kiyonaga amongst the leaders of the popular school. He was a more vigorous but less elegant artist than Kiyonaga, and his works appear to have been more numerous and varied than those of any of his contemporaries. His reputation is founded chiefly upon his portraits of actors in character, but his drawings of women were as graceful as those of Utamaro, and less extravagant in their mannerisms. A fair example of his style is shown in Plate 3. His *Seirō bijin awasé kagami* (1776), a pictorial mirror of fair women, is perhaps the most beautiful album of colour prints that Japan has ever produced, and his collection of portraits of the hundred famous poets of Japan is also one of the treasures of the collector. A series of theatrical portraits printed in colours, entitled *Kobi no Tsubo* (1770), has more conventionality and less character than his other works, but is redeemed by the decorative effect of the colouring. This and the two preceding works may be seen in the British Museum Collection. The engraver of his principal works was Inoüyé Shinichiro.

Three pupils of Shunshō, named Shunjō, Shunko, and Shunyei, closely followed his style, and confined their labours almost wholly to portraits of actors and wrestlers. Of the others, Shunman, who studied under both Shunshō and Kitawo Shigémasa, was chiefly noted for illustrations to comic verselets and New Year's cards ; Shunchō, for prints of holiday scenes which are amongst the most delicate and pleasing of the broadsides of the end of the last century ; Shunwō, for miscellaneous designs ; Shuntei, for martial scenes ; Gakutei, for New Year's cards ; and lastly

PLATE 4. FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER KATSUGAWA SHUNCHŌ (C. 1785).

Shunrō, who worked for a time in the *atelier* of Shunshō, became known later to all the world as Hokusai.

The principal contemporary and independent workers with Shunshō,

Fig. 14.—*Falcon. From a picture by the Chinese Emperor, Hwei Tsung* (12*th century*). *Engraved in the Wa-Kan mei-gwa yen* (1749).

in addition to Kiyonaga and Harunobu, were Utagawa Toyonobu, Koriusai, Kitawo Shigémasa, Utagawa Toyoharu, and Toriyama Sékiyen Toyofusa. Kitawo Shigémasa is best known for his attractive drawings

of women in a book called *É-hon Biwa-ko*, published in 1780, the illustrations to which were in black and white, but showed the influence of Katsuguwa Shunshō to a very marked degree. He was the master of one of the best of the broadside designers, Masanobu or Kioden, whose reputation as an artist, great as it was, has been eclipsed by his contributions to literature. Toriyama Sékiyen is little known, except by an interesting album of colour prints engraved by Riokō Tōyei, and a curious book descriptive of Japanese goblins, the Zokku hiak'ki (1779); lastly Utagawa Toyoharu, who may perhaps be regarded as the founder of the line that was destined to receive the mantle of the Katsugawas, devoted nearly the whole of his time to painting, and has left few colour prints.

The generation succeeding that of Shunshō was little less brilliant. It included Kitawo Masanobu, Kitagawa Utamaro, Hosoï Yeishi, Yeizan Utagawa Toyohiro, Utagawa Toyokuni, and Hokusai. Utagawa Toyohiro is best known as the artist of some of the romances of Bakin, an honour which he shared with Hokusai; but his chromoxylographs, although not numerous, were equal to those of Shunshō for delicacy of outline and subdued harmony of colour, and his engravings in black and white illustrating contemporary novels equal those of Hokusai, from the purely academic standpoint, but have less vigour and character (Fig. 22). Utagawa Toyokuni, the greatest artist of the school, was the designer of an enormous number of broadsides, theatrical and otherwise. His style in figure drawing passed through several changes, from an early type in which the subjects, usually actors, are represented with elongated limbs, sharp features, and extravagant action, to a series of the most elegant and delicately coloured portraitures, male and female, that have ever been produced in his school. He also illustrated many books, and with his death in 1828 commenced the decay of the "broadside" industry. Both Toyohiro and Toyokuni were fortunate in their pupils, the former in Hiroshigé, of whom we shall hear more, the latter in Kuniyasu, Kunisada and Kuniyoshi, who rivalled their masters in industry and almost in genius. Kitawo Masanobu, better known as Kioden, was one of the most celebrated novelists of Japan, but the admirers of his chromoxylographic broadsides, all pictures of fair women, may well regret that his devotion to literature has robbed art of many precious works. His drawing was admirable in its grace of outline,

Fig. 15.—*From a woodcut after a drawing with the finger-nail, by Shih Ts'ao, a Chinese artist. Engraved in the Wa-Kan mei-gwa yen* (1749).

and the colouring, pitched in a somewhat higher key than that of Shunshō and Suzuki Harunobu, was almost unequalled in decorative quality, even amongst the beautiful works of his associates. Kitagawa Utamaro, a pupil of Toriyama Sékiyen, who has been honoured by a monograph from the pen of M. de Goncourt, is for many authorities the most shining light of Japanese chromoxylography. He has left two albums, both distinguished by the perfection of the colour scheme. One of these, the *Momo chidori kioka awasé*, consisting of pictures of birds and flowers with comic verselets, is technically one of the best examples of Japanese colour-printing, and may be noticed also for the bold use the engraver has made of uninked blocks to produce an embossing of the paper surface. The other, the *Seiro nenjiu gioji*, or Annual of the Courtesan Quarter (1804) is a specimen of his best manner; but his reputation depends mainly upon his broadside representations of women. These have remarkable charm of line, pose, and composition, but the effect is marred by the ungraceful mannerisms perverting the drawing of the faces and limbs. In colour they rank next to those of Harunobu, Kiyonaga, and Kioden. According to M. de Goncourt he died in 1806, at the age of fifty-two.

With Utamaro may be classed Hosoï Yeishi. This artist was a pupil of Kano Yeisen, a member of the classical Kano School of painting, but he devoted the efforts of his prime to designing coloured broadsides. He left one volume of chromoxylographic pictures, the *Onna San-jiu-rok' kasen* (1798), a series of portraits of the celebrated female poets of Japan, engraved by Yamaguchi Matsugoro and Yamaguchi Seizo, and it is interesting to note that Hokusai made his *début* in the higher grades of book illustration by a coloured frontispiece to the same work. His broadsides were nearly all portraits of women, as graceful, as conventional, and as unlike the living persons they were supposed to represent as those of Utamaro. Yeizan also was especially in repute for his drawings of women.

Hokusai has been named last, although as pupil and master his labours cover more than forty years of the period under consideration. Great as was his influence in the cause of popular art, his work had little effect upon the progress of chromoxylography, and it will hence be more fitting to speak of him in association with the book illustrators.

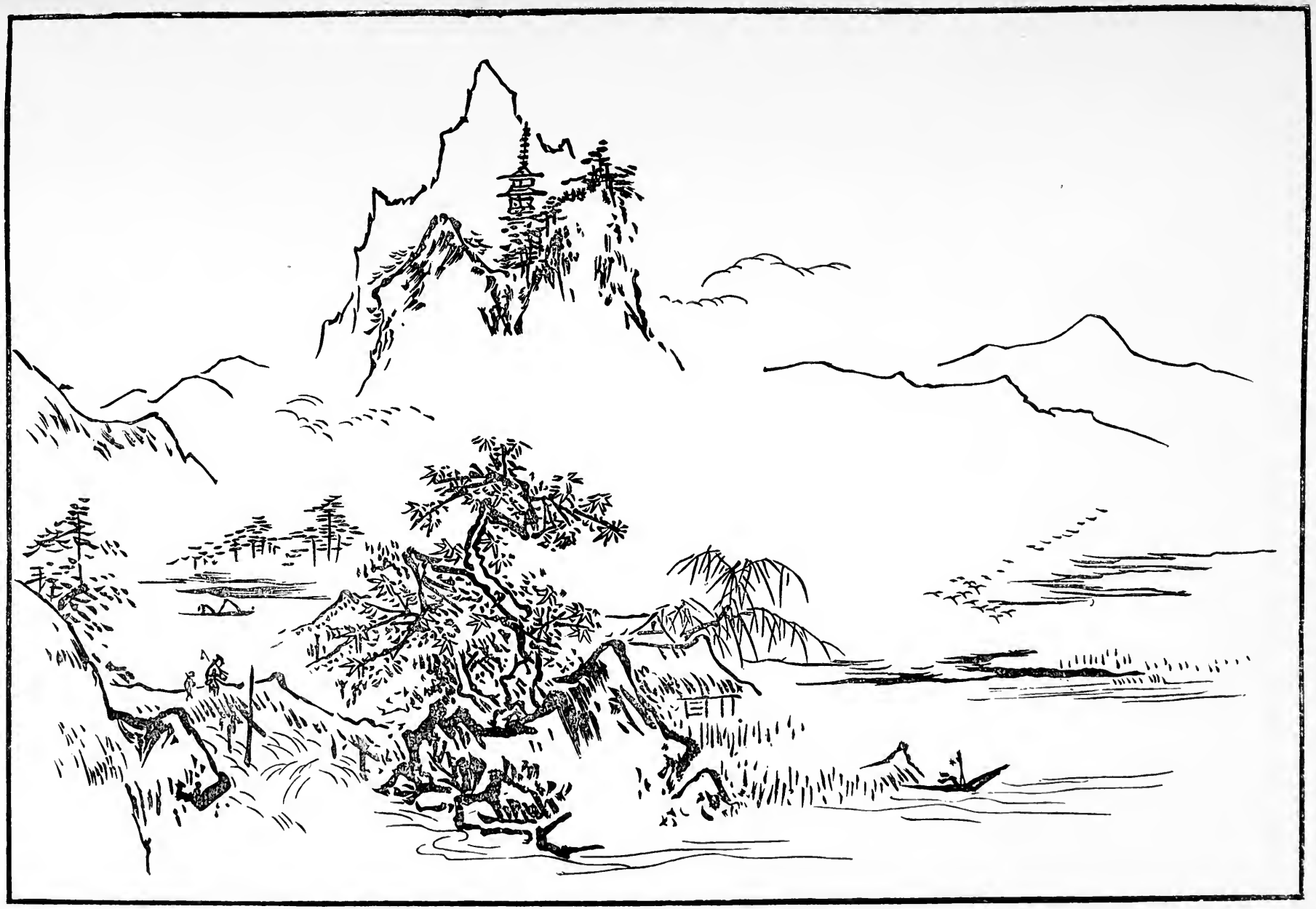


Fig. 16.—*Chinese Landscape, by Kano Tanyu. From an engraving in the Wa-Kan mei-hitsu gwa yei* (1750).

With these artists the palmy days of colour-printing drew to a close. The last of the masters Utagawa Toyokuni, died in 1828, and his pupils were the first to permit their designs to be dishonoured by cheap and gaudy pigments bought in the newly opened European market. His death was the knell of artistic chromoxylography. The story of its decadence will be told under the heading of the Fifth Period.

There are no coloured engravings in the world that may be compared with those of Japan in the long period from the coming of Torii Kiyonaga to the passing of Utagawa Toyokuni : the eye is beguiled by a brush stroke of ineffable calligraphic beauty and by a tender harmony of colour that cheers, but never wearies the senses. In most of the popular broadsides of this time an almost feminine gentleness pervades the choice of motive and its treatment, and it is but rarely, as in some of the earlier work of Toyokuni and his pupil Kuniyasu, that a stronger chord is struck. As schemes of dramatic decoration they are scarcely to be surpassed and have rarely been equalled ; and the time is not far distant when the sheets which brought to artist and engraver the pittance of a mechanic, and were sold for a vile price in the streets of Yedo, Osaka and Kyoto will rank in the estimation of the collector with the masterpieces of the engraver's art.

Engravings in Black and White in the Fourth Period.

Apart from the work of the Torii school in the development of chromoxylography, the first part of the fourth period, extending from 1710 to 1765, is marked principally by the labours of two men, Tachibana Morikuni (1670–1748) and Nishigawa Sukénobu (1671 to about 1760), both pupils of the most severely classical of the orthodox academies of painting, and both prolific artists, who worked in different directions in the cause of book illustration. The former is best known by his volumes of woodcuts, designed for the guidance of artisan artists, comprising drawings of birds, flowers, trees, landscapes, scenes of history and legend, in fact, every kind of motive that could be utilised by industrial draughtsmen—who down to the present day have continued to profit by his legacy—and he has besides left some specimens of his more purely academical work, in the form of a masterly series of quick

Fig. 17.—Swallow and Willow Tree. From a woodcut after Kano Tanyu, in the Wa-Kan mei-hitsu gwa yei (1750)

sketches in the style of his first academy (*Umpitsu so-gwa*, 1749). Sukénobu, on the other hand, although a contributor to popular art education in his *E-hon Yamato hiji*, which consists principally of illustrated legends, won his reputation by his drawings of women—attractive little personages with every charm that graceful and varied action, gently undulating contours, and clinging folds of cunningly-devised drapery, were able to confer, more natural in feature and proportions than the later sketches of Yeishi and Utamaro, but as devoid of individuality as the figures of a European fashion plate. He was nevertheless a true artist, and the woodcuts in his more noted albums are amongst the most pleasing pictures of his century. He also illustrated novels and a host of books of other and various kinds. The engravers associated with Moronobu and Sukénobu were Fujimura Zenyémon and Murakami Genyémon.

As a third, but later and less influential artist of the same class, may be named Tsukioka Tangé (1717–1786), who is reputed for his pictures commemorating the deeds of Japanese heroes of the past. He left also a book illustrative of the scenery of Eastern Japan.

Another characteristic of the new period must also be accredited to a pupil of the Kano school of painting, Oöka Shunboku (died about 1760, at the age of eighty-four), who edited the first three or four of an invaluable series of albums containing copies admirably drawn and engraved, after pictures by famous Japanese and Chinese masters. The earliest of these was the *Gwashi kwai-yō*, published in 1707, which was followed by the *E-hon té-kagami* (1720), the *Gwa-ko sen-ran* (1740), and the *Wa-Kan mei-gwa-yen* (1749), all still in use amongst artisan designers ; and the good work was continued by Sakurai Shiuzan in the *Wa-Kan mei-hitsu gwa-yei* (1750), the *Gwa-hō* (1764), the *Wa-Kan mei-hitsu kingioku gwa-fu* (1771), and the *Gwa-soku* (1777). Some examples out of this mine of wealth are shown in Figs. 12 to 19.

There were few volumes devoted to scenery in this period. The *Tōgoku meisho-shi* of Tsukioka Tangé is perhaps the most noteworthy, but there were also many panoramic views of long tracts of country, hand-coloured, and made up into *Orihon*, or folding books, a series which commenced at least as early as 1689, and was continued down to the middle of the last century or later.

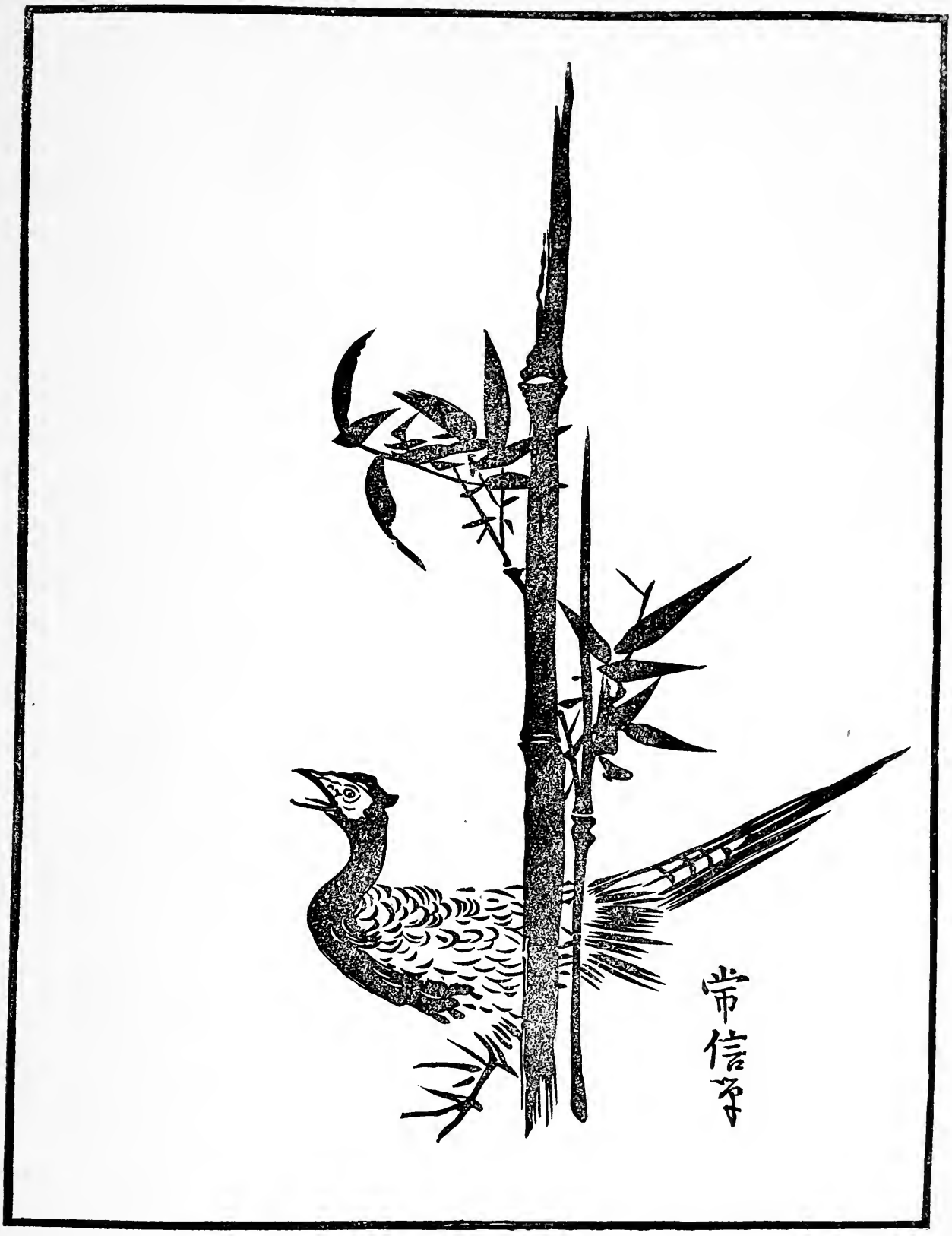


Fig. 18.—*Pheasant and Bamboo. From a woodcut after Kano Tsunenobu, engraved in the Wa-Kan mei-hitsu gwa yei* (1750).

Engraving in Black and White in the Second Part of the Fourth Period.

The Second Part of the Fourth Period, extending from 1765 to 1828, was not only the palmy age of chromoxylography, but it was,

Fig. 19.—*Tengu on Boar. From a drawing by Kokan, engraved in the Wa-Kan mei-hitsu kingioku gwa-fu* (1771).

moreover, stamped by the development of three new features in book-illustration: firstly, a remarkable series of topographical handbooks for the principal cities and more important provinces of Japan; secondly, the great extension of the illustrated novel under the writers Kioden, Bakin, and others; and thirdly, the important series of albums of miscellaneous sketches typified by the Hokusai Mangwa.

Illustrated Topographical Books.

The *topographical handbook* in its more complete form is the product of the last hundred years, but pictorial representations of native scenery have been published since about 1680, either in the form of "single

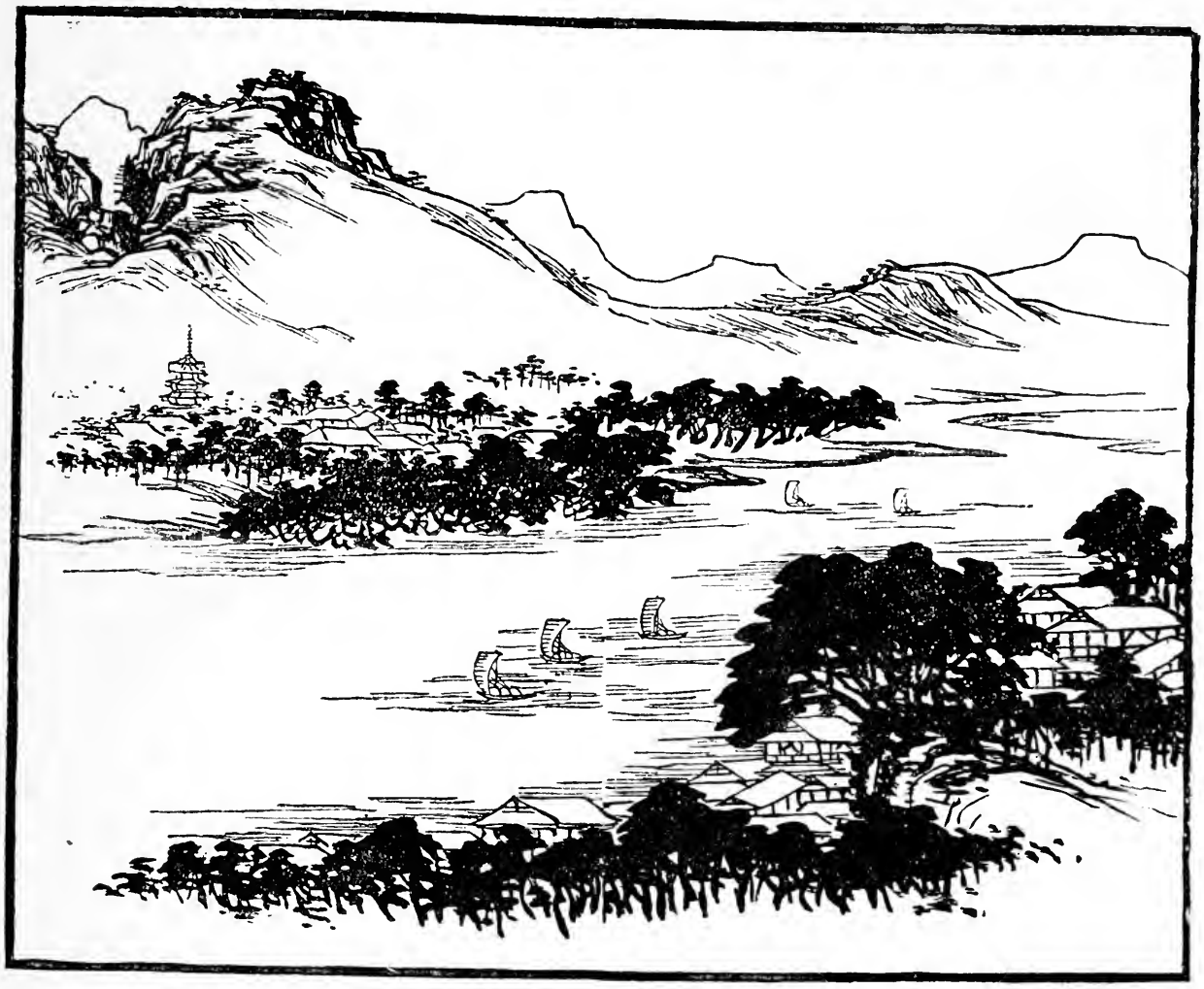


Fig. 20.— Landscape from a drawing by Roren, engraved in the Gwa-tō Sui fuyo. Yedo, 1809.

sheets" (*ichimai-yé*), sewn volumes (*shomotsu*), long panoramic pictures converted into folding books (*orihon*), or rolls (*makimono*).

The typical *Meisho dzu-yé*, or pictorial description of noted places, is, however, a work of ambitious scope and of wide utility. It indicates all the spots famous for landscape beauties, collects learned records of the historical and legendary lore of the localities described, enumerates the

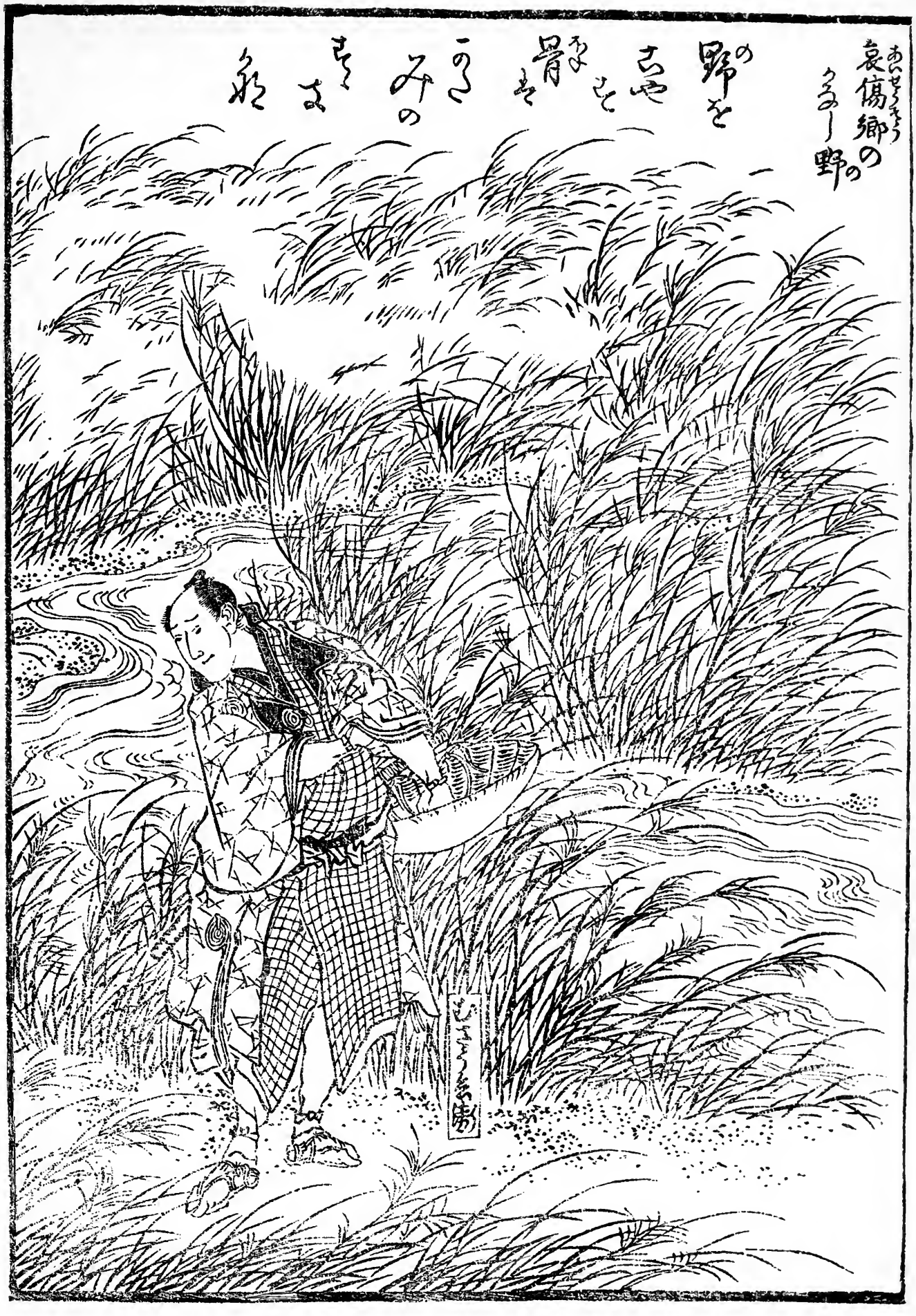
Fig. 21.—Facsimile of two pages of a Kusa-zoshi Novelette (c. 1840).

various objects of curiosity or archæological importance preserved in the neighbourhood, contributes scientific notes upon the flora and fauna of the district, and opens a fund of practical information as to industries, commerce, and a hundred other matters of interest both to resident and visitor. Each of the great cities and of the chief provinces had its handbook carefully edited and illustrated by the leading popular artists of the day. To Yedo (now Tokyo) and its environs were dedicated twenty substantial volumes; Kyoto had eleven volumes, exclusive of a large work devoted to its gardens; the Tokaido, the high road between Yedo and Kyoto, six volumes; the temple of Itsukushima and its vicinity filled ten volumes; and the list might be extended up to two hundred volumes or more. The first of the series was the *Miako* (Kyoto) *Meisho dzu-yé* (1787), illustrated by Takéhara Shunchōsai, who also supplied drawings for the handbooks for Yamato (1791), Idzumi (1793), and Settsu (1798).

Miwa Tokei, Hayami Shunkiōsai, Nishimura Chiuwa, Hokkio Nishikuni, and some others contributed to the work in the first two decades of the present century, but the void left by the death of Shunchōsai was not filled until 1837, when the publication of the *Yédo Meisho dzu-yé* introduced striking representations of the scenery of the capital of the Shogun, from the pencil of Haségawa Settan. A description of the holiday resorts of the city, forming suite with the last, was issued in 1838, and a smaller book of a similar kind in 1839. Many other popular artists soon appeared in the field, and some guide-books, like the *Nikko-zan Shi*, included designs by several contributors. The latest of the more important "Meishos" were the *Tonégawa dzu shi* (1856), illustrated by various artists, and the *Kwaraku Meisho dzu-yé* (1859), with pictures by Hanzan Yasunobu.

As previously noted, the handbooks embellished by Shunchosai were not the first publications descriptive of well-known places. Views of Yedo appeared before the end of the seventeenth century. The *Kwaraku Saiken dzu*, published in 1703, contained good drawings of buildings and landscapes, and followed the *Kusa-zoshi* in placing the text upon the same page with the illustration (but in this case writing and sketch were separated by cloud-like outlines), the *Togoku Meisho Shi*, a description of noted places in Eastern Japan, illustrated by Tsukioka Tangé, was printed in 1762, and a number of *orihon* volumes with hand-coloured

Fig. 22.—"Murder will out." Illustration



to a Novel by Utagawa Toyohiro (1810).

drawings in panoramic form were issued between 1710 and 1770. None of these essays, however, merit comparison with the handbooks of Shunchōsai and his followers. The *Meizan dzu-yé* of Tani Bunchō is an excellent supplement to the group of the *Meisho dzu-yé*, and contains many vigorous sketches of the mountain scenery of Japan.

The illustrations of these works as a class are very spirited, and, notwithstanding the absence of light and shade and the defects of perspective, conveyed a vivid and faithful impression of the scenes depicted. The figures introduced into the landscape, street, or building were admirably grouped, and the more idealised pictorial transcripts of history and folk-lore were well composed and told their story with good effect. The introduction of arbitrary cloud forms used for decorative purposes by the masters of the ancient Japanese school was adopted for convenience in the "Meisho" drawings, partly to exclude unnecessary details, and partly to secure a space for descriptive text. The picture, when large enough to cover two pages, was divided into halves, and where the range of view was unusually wide, the design often extended in segments over three, four, or more pages, a separate block being necessarily used for each page.

Illustrated Works of Fiction.

Works of this class, commencing with the *Isé Monogatari* in 1608 and the *Hogen Monogatari* in 1629, were apparently in the first instance engraved transcripts of classical volumes which had previously been multiplied by manuscripts, and the illustrations were copied from the paintings that were made to accompany the written text. The woodcuts in both cases showed all the characters of the formal pictures of the old native or Yamato school, even to the introduction of fictitious clouds traversing the foreground, a convention originally devised merely as a surface for decorative masses of gold or colour, but preserved by the book artists at first in simple imitation of the model, and afterwards for the convenience of covering spaces in the design which he did not care to fill with detail. In the guide-book of the last hundred years the clouds are the *etceteras* of the draughtsman.

The early volumes, often works of some pretension, were of octavo

Fig. 23.—The Mad Woman. From a woodcut after Hokusai in the Hokusai gwa-fu (1820).

size, but they were soon followed by others of a less imposing and more popular type. One set of these, consisting usually of semi-historical stories, were of oblong shape and duodecimo size, embellished by whole-page or two-page pictorial woodcuts; the other was a still smaller publication issued on very thin fasciculi, each with an ornamental wrapper and bearing cuts on every page. These novelettes, or *Kusa-zoshi* as they were called, were essentially popular literature—heroic, tragic, or humorous—and they were characterised by the strange admixture of text and illustration upon the same page, the lines of the text occupying the spaces in the picture that would usually be filled with background or accessories. The personages introduced into the scene were moreover distinguished by little character labels, generally placed upon some part of the dress, in order to relieve the reader from any difficulty in interpreting the compositions (Fig. 21).

A very early specimen, dated 1662, is now in the British Museum Collection. This contained roughly executed illustrations that bore a slight resemblance in style to the play-bills of the commencement of the eighteenth century, but in more recent books of the same class the work of the engraver and printer was more carefully done, and the list of artists included all the best names in the popular school, including those of Torii Kiyonobu, Torii Kiyomitsu, Nishigawa Sukénobu, Torii Kiyonaga, Torii Kiyotsuné, Tomikawa Ginsetsu, Kitawo Masanobu (Kioden), Rantokusai Shundō, Kitagawa Utamaro, Utagawa Toyohiro, Utagawa Toyokuni, Yeishi, and Hokusai. The quaint little *Kusa-zoshi* is now extinct, and its place is taken, sad to say, by commonplace volumes printed in the European style with movable metallic type on machine-made paper, and illustrated by process blocks.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century the publishers reverted to the octavo form, and the first volume or fasciculus of each work, or section of a work, was usually prefaced by a few introductory plates printed from two or three blocks. These stories were of formidable length, sometimes filling sixty, eighty, or more volumes, and the sentiment of the text and pictures was apt to run in a rather fierce strain, bringing before us such an assemblage of ghastly murders, bloody combats, and ghostly visitations, intermingled with such feats of superhuman strength and ideal heroism that it was difficult to imagine that the books were created by and

PLATE 5. FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER UTAMARO (c. 1800).

for so kindly, gentle, and pacific a people as the Japanese trading and artisan community. The illustrations were contributed principally by Hokusai, whose most dramatic efforts are to be found in these volumes, by Giokuzan, Toyohiro, Toyokuni, and later by Keisai Yeisen, Kunisada, Yanagawa Shigénobu, and Giokuransai Sadahidé. Each picture usually covers two opposed pages, the block being sawn through and printed in

Fig. 24.—*Reduced from a woodcut after Hokusai, in the É-hon Tsuzoku Sankoku Shi* (1826).

two halves, so that a mental effort is required to establish continuity (see pp. 46, 47). In some illustrations, but rarely in novels, the subject may be even more subdivided, as in an album, entitled *Shin Kosha-bunko*, in the British Museum Collection, where the body and tail of a peacock spread in full luxuriance through five entire pages.

These pictures, however strange they may appear to us with their daring conventions, their mixed ideas of perspective, their disregard of

all the laws of light and shade, and the inexhaustible puzzledom of their motives, have many and great artistic beauties for all who will take the trouble to study them as they deserve to be studied. When we recollect that they were drawn by poorly paid artisans for the delectation of a public as poor as themselves, the vigour and fertility of conception, and the high and sustained quality of execution that they display, can win nothing but wonder and admiration. Let us compare the *Kusa-zoshi* with the contemporary chap books of our own country, or the novel illustrations of Hokusai and Toyohiro with the average pictorial cuts in our light literature of the early Victorian period, and we shall understand better the claims that the humble book artists of the Far East have upon the appreciation of their countrymen and of art lovers of all nationalities.

The leading figure amongst the book artists of the first three or four decades of the present century was undoubtedly the man whose name is best known outside Japan, Hokusai.

Hokusai, the son of a Yedo mirror maker named Nakajima Isé, was born in 1760, and seems to have lived in almost complete obscurity until he had passed the mid-point of an ordinary life. All that we know of the first forty years of his existence is that he had been a pupil in the school of Katsugawa Shunshō, and under the name of Shunrō had produced a few colour-print broadsides in the style of his master. In 1798, however, we find him contributing a frontispiece to Yeishi's ambitious volume of portraits of the female poets of Japan (*Onna San-jiu-rok'kasen*), and in the next few years he produced a valuable series of colour print albums, depicting scenes in and about Yedo. In this period he also drew illustrations for *Kusa-zoshi* (in one of which he appears as an author, under the pseudonym of Tokitaro) and drew designs for New Year's cards (*surimono*) in association with his pupil, Hokkei, and others. A little later he began to supply some remarkably vigorous drawings to illustrate the novels of his friend Bakin, and at length, in 1812, he issued the first volume of the *Mangwa*, a famous collection of miscellaneous sketches for the use of artisans and students of drawing. From this time his influence became paramount in the popular school, and in the period following the death of Toyokuni, he was the dominant influence in the world of artisan art. It is noteworthy that he never contributed to theatrical illustration,

despite his early training under Shunshō, but left this speciality entirely in the hands of the Utagawas.

The first European account of Hokusai appeared in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* for 1878 in a short outline of the *History of the Pictorial Art of Japan*, by the author. He has since been the subject of eulogy by many high authorities, including Mr. F. V. Dickins, who has published an English edition of the *Hundred Views of*

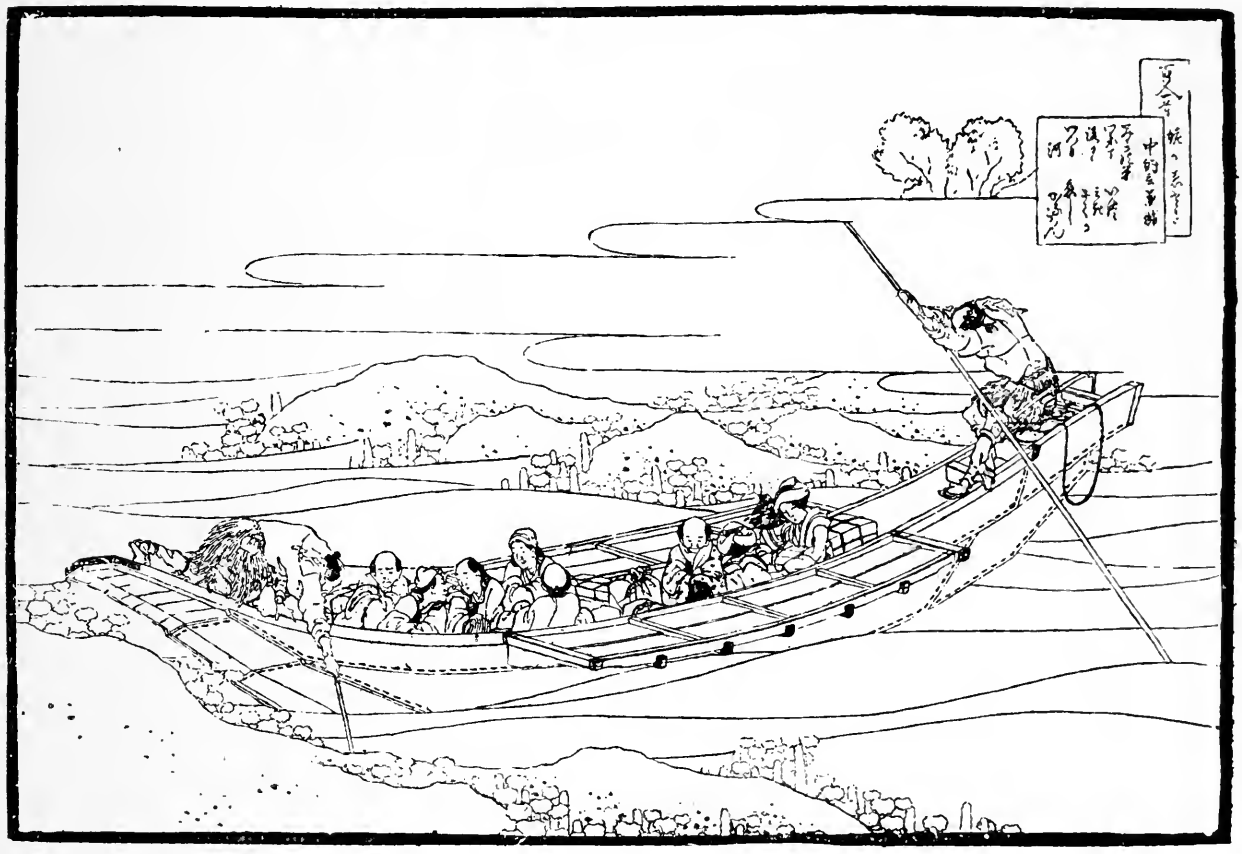


Fig. 25.—Reduced from a drawing made for the engraver by Hokusai (c. 1820). (Ernest Hart Collection.)

Mount Fuji, one of the best of his works next to the monumental series of rough sketches (*Hokusai Mangwa*), M. Duret in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts;* M. Gonse in *L'Art Japonais*, Dr. Brinckmann in *Kunst und Handwerk in Japan*, and Professor Fenollosa in an introduction to an exhibition of the artist's work at Boston. All are agreed that he was the most versatile, original and prolific artist of his school, and that his numerous albums and book illustrations have done more than any other

agency to further the cause of industrial art amongst his countrymen, and to make that art known in the rest of the world.

His colour prints published in the first few years of the century are less harmonious than the contemporary works of Shunchō, Utamaro, the older Toyokuni, and some others, and his drawing at this time had faults, especially in the ungainly proportions of his figures, that were greatly amended in his later work in the illustrations to the novels of Bakin and in the *Mangwa*. It is in the latter, and in the *Fugaku hiak'kei*, a *chef d'œuvre* of his declining years, that his virile and animated outlines appear to the greatest advantage. The principal engravers of his works were Égawa Tomikichi and the pupil of the latter, Égawa Santaro.

As a painter he must be studied in such a collection as that brought together by Dr. Bigelow, and recently shown at Boston, U.S. Professor Fenollosa, in his scholarly introduction to the catalogue, pays a high tribute to his qualities as a designer and colourist in the later period of his work, and believes that his defects of education alone prevented the full development of his genius. It must not be overlooked, however, that although a literary and artistic training on the narrow classical lines of his time might have made him a greater painter, there is even more probability that it would have stifled the verve and originality which give the savour to his art, and would have led to a life's work of infinitely less value to the world than that which he has actually given.

He died in 1849 at the advanced age of eighty-nine, retaining his powers almost unimpaired to the very last. With his withdrawal from the scene, came the beginning of the end of the popular school.

He left an artist daughter named Yeijo, and several pupils. Only a few of these, however, Hokkei, Shinsai, Hokujiu, Hokuün, and Isai have left any mark upon the process of wood engraving, and of these the first approached most nearly to the master in vigour and originality. Shinsai is known almost exclusively as a designer of New Year's cards.

Influence of European Art in the Fourth Period.

European art exercised little real influence in this period, but a painter named Shiba Gokan, who flourished in the early years of the nineteenth century, learned a little of the principles of linear perspective

from the Dutch, and is said to have introduced engraving on copper. His ideas of perspective may be seen in his *Gwa-to Sai-yu dan*, a book of travels with woodcut illustrations, published in 1781 (British Museum

Fig. 26.—*Gradation print from the Keisai so-gwa, by Keisai Yeisen* (1832).

Collection). The book-illustrators and scene-painters from about the same time began to adopt perspective, but used or neglected it in a

most capricious fashion, sometimes introducing vanishing points with fair accuracy in one part of the picture, while drawing the rest on the Chinese isometric plan, but never displaying any real study of the principles of the science. Hokusai's sketch in Fig. 24 is perhaps the best attempt to apply European teaching.

The fourth term, during which were produced most of the finest examples of pictorial engraving in black and colours, ended about 1828. It was followed by a period in which Hokusai, now associated with a new generation, stood pre-eminent.

Fifth Period.

The most interesting publications of the *fifth period*, extending from the death of Toyokuni to the death of Hokusai, were the later volumes of the *Mangwa*, the *Fugaku hiak'kei*, or hundred views of the Peerless Mountain, and many other books by Hokusai, which proved that the eye of the "Ancient of a Hundred Centuries" (*Man ro-jin*) as he called himself in his later years, had become more correct, while his hand had lost none of its cunning, and he still held his place unchallenged down to the year of his death. The *Fugaku hiak'kei* may be indicated as one of the best examples of the engraving of the period. His associates in the latter half of his career were Keisai Yeisen, from whose album of rough sketches Figs. 26 and 27 are reproduced, Utagawa Kunisada, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Ichiriusai Hiroshigé, Haségawa Settan, Haségawa Settei, and Matsukawa Hanzan. Kunisada (who in 1844 adopted the name of his teacher, Toyokuni) and Kuniyoshi supplied innumerable designs to the publishers of chromoxylographic broadsides, which showed all the old strength of design, but for the most part ruined by cheap European pigments. They also illustrated several books, mostly novelettes and theatrical literature, but the *Kaibiaku yuraiki*, an historical work, and the *Kuniyoshi zatsugwa*, are good examples of the work of Kuniyoshi outside the single sheets, which occupied his chief energies. Kunisada died in 1865 at the age of seventy-eight, and Kuniyoshi in 1861 at the age of sixty-one.

The establishment of an offshoot of the Utagawa theatrical school at Osaka was a special feature in the fifth period. This appears

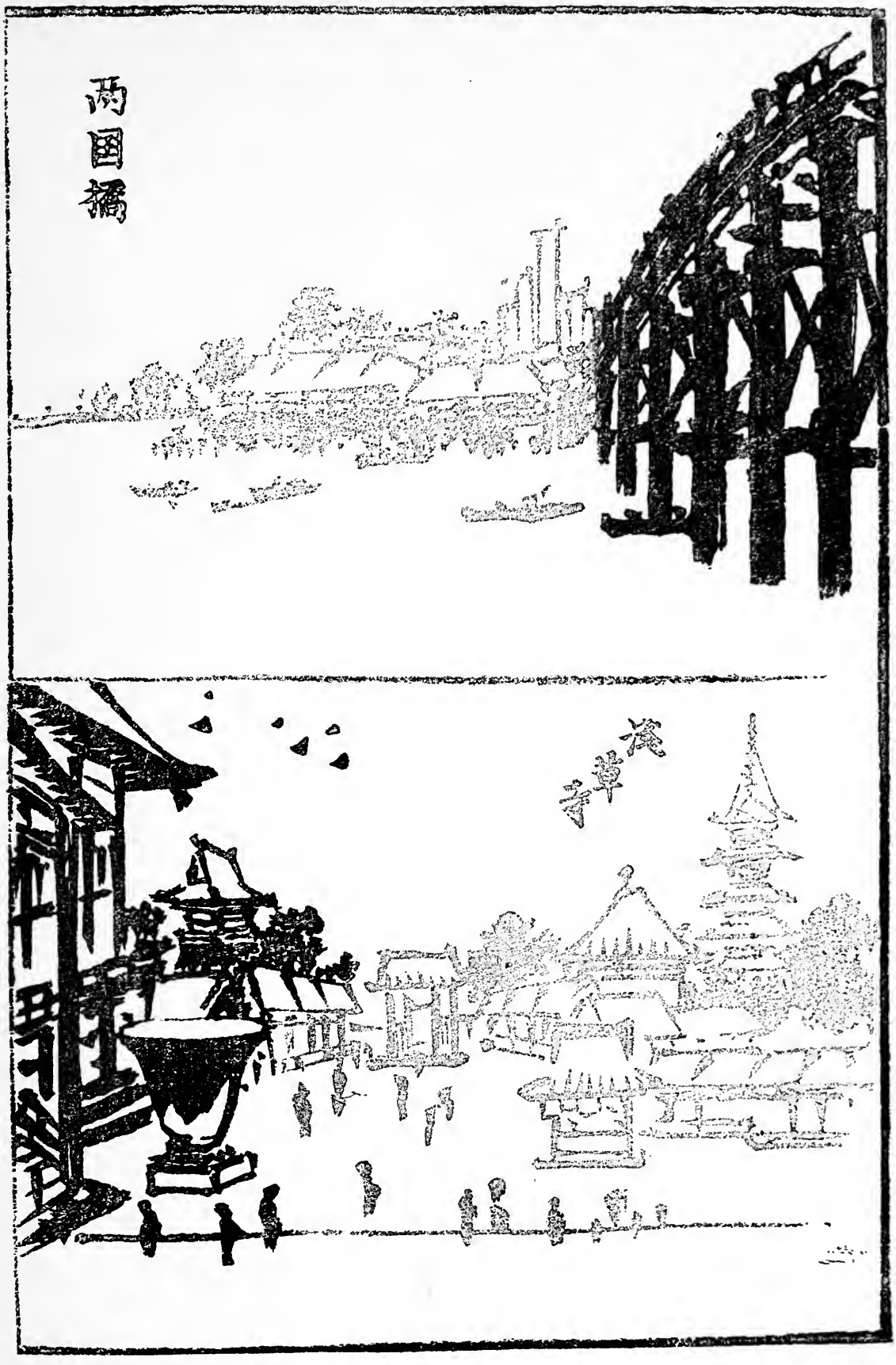


Fig. 27.—Views in Yedo. Specimen of gradation print in the Keisai so-gwa, by Keisai Yeisen (1832).

to have been developed through a number of pupils of Kunisada and Hokusai from about 1835 or 1840. In style of drawing the Osaka single sheets differ little from those of the Yedo artists, but there are certain peculiarities in the types given to the faces of the different actors that stamp almost all the representations, and the colours are generally stronger and marked by a greater predominance of yellow than in the works of the parent school. The principal names were those of Hokucho, Hokuyei, Hokushiu, Sadamasu, and Shigéharu. The publication of landscape broadsides initiated by Hokusai was taken up by Hiroshigé. This artist, originally a pupil of Toyohiro, at first followed the style of his teacher but developed a new manner before the middle of the century, when he commenced a series of views of Yedo, the Tokaido, and other parts of Japan, of great interest and often of considerable power and beauty (Fig. 28). His work is characterised by unsuccessful attempts to realise effects of perspective, and, occasionally, of light and shade, but his bold and original composition and vigorous drawing gave a high value to many of his designs.[1] Unfortunately, however, the value of much of his later labour in chromoxylography was injured by the bad quality of the colours used by the printers, and his true strength must be seen in his paintings. He died of cholera in 1858 at the age of sixty-one. His only rival in the delineation of scenery was Haségawa Settan, whose labours were confined to drawings for topographical handbooks. The *Yedo Meisho dyu-yé*, the *Nenjiu gioji daisei*, and the *Toto saijiki*, in the last of which he was joined by his son Settei, form the monuments to his talent. Amongst the last of the handbook artists was Matsukawa Hanzan, who left some clever illustrations to the *Kwaraku* (*Kioto*) *Meisho dyu-ye* and the *Saikoku sanjiu sancho metsho dzu-yé* (1854); and Yoyen Yoshitada, the artist of the *Zenkōji Michi Meishō dzu-yé* (1850). Lastly must be mentioned an entirely independent artist, originally attached to the Naturalistic school of painting, Kikuchi Yōsai, whose drawings of the worthies of ancient Japan, in the twenty volumes of the book called the *Zenken Ko-jitsu*, are superior in refinement and truth to anything of the kind produced by Hokusa, or his school. The portraitures of Yōsai were actually types of the patrician order, while those of the popular artists were either purely

[1] See an article by the Author on *Artistic Japan*, Vol. 2.

imaginary, like the women of Utamaro, or modelled upon stage impersonations, adjusted to the tastes of an audience from which, unfortunately, all the representatives of culture and gentle birth were excluded by the social law of the age.

This period in the history of wood-engraving fell below that which it succeeded, despite the valuable legacies bequeathed by Hokusai,

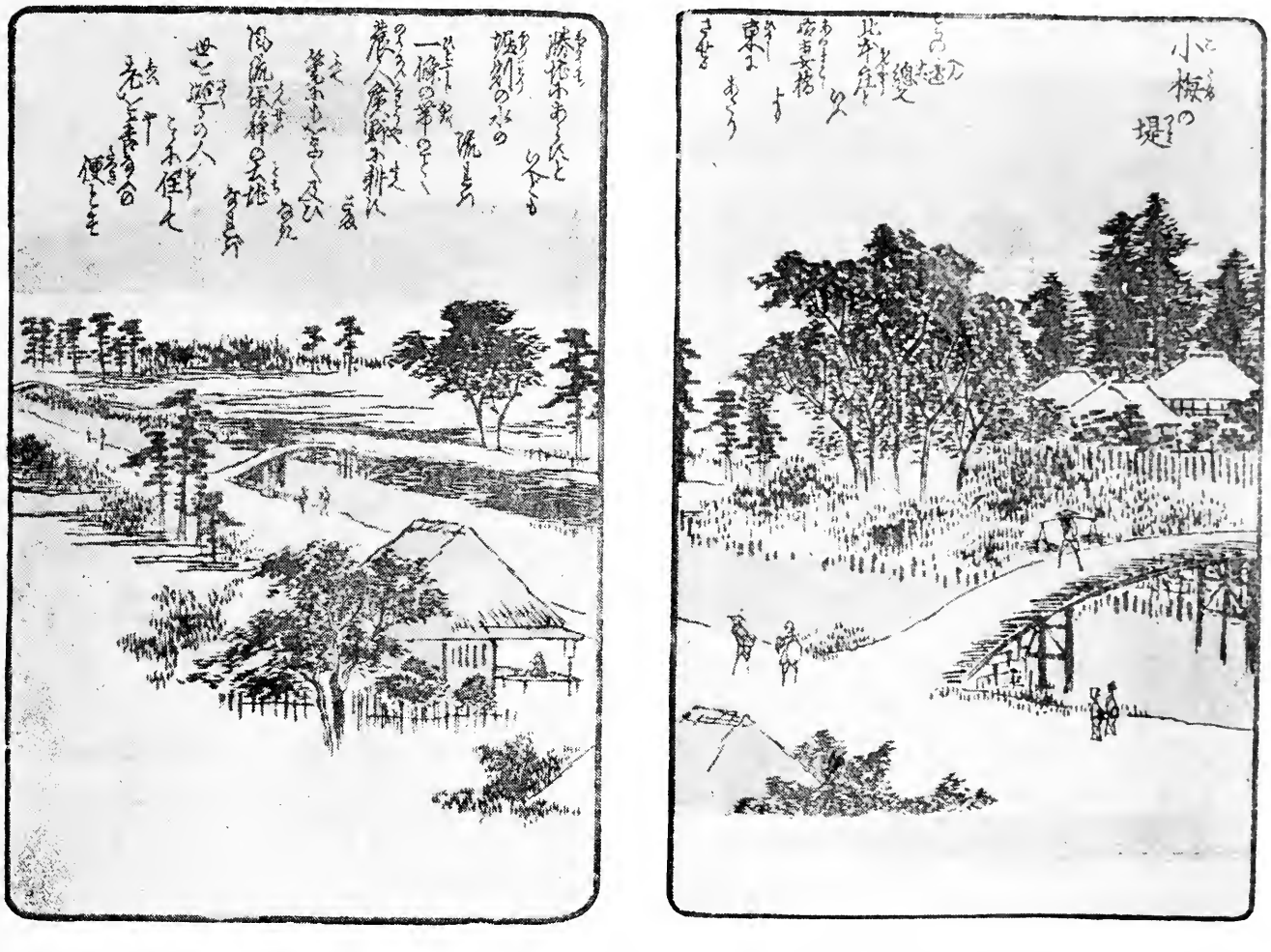


Fig. 28.—Scene near Yedo. From an engraving after Hiroshigé. In the É-hon Yedo Meisho.

Settan, Yósai, and Hiroshigé, and with it the spirit that inspired these men seem to pass away ; for, from its closing years, the single sheet colour prints were becoming a very nightmare to the sensitive eye, and the albums of miscellaneous sketches, the pictorial handbooks of the towns and provinces, the vigorously illustrated novels ; in fact, everything that formed the delight of the xylographic collector came almost suddenly to an end. It would not, however, be difficult for those who

have studied the condition of the country in the disturbed period that preceded, and for a time followed, the downfall of the usurping Shogunate to account for the evil that had befallen the arts of peace.

Fig. 29.—*Reduced from a woodcut after Kikuchi Yosai, in the Zenken Kojitsu* (*c.* 1840).

Sixth Period.

Of the latest period, from the death of Hokusai to the present time, there is only a little to say. It began under very unfavourable auspices, for the albums of Isai (Fig. 30), the landscape volumes

of Hanzan and Yoshitada (see p. 62), and a few curious attempts to imitate European art (Fig. 31), were the principal issues between 1850 and 1870; but within the last twenty years an energetic revival of book illustration has taken place, and a few of the recent publications show that neither pictorial nor xylographic power is wanting. The "single-sheet" industry is still in difficulties, and may never resume its ancient glories, although a spur to effort in this

Fig. 30.—*Bishamon and the Demon. From an engraving after Katsushika Isai in the Kwa-cho-san-sui dzu-shiki* (1866).

direction has been given by the popular demand for pictures of the Chino-Japanese war; but in the volumes of bird and flower drawings of Bairei, the graceful fairy-tale pictures and collections of artisan designs by Sensai Yeitaku (Figs. 32 and 34), the albums of Kiosai, often called the second Hokusai, whose original and humorous work deserves a monograph to itself (Fig. 33), and the recent war broadsides of Gekko, there is much to redeem the failure of the earlier years of the period; and the encouragement given by Europe and America to the charming

series of children's books published by the Kobunsha Company has already proved to the Japanese publishers that good work may now be made more profitable than at any time in the history of their calling.

Technique.

The main facts in connection with the technique of wood engraving are as follows: The picture, drawn for the engraver upon thin trans-

Fig. 31.—*Napoleon at St. Helena. From the Jimbutsu Kaigai shoden* (*c.* 1870).

lucent paper of a particular kind, is pasted face downwards upon a plank of wood, usually cherry—sawn in the direction of the grain, instead of across it, as in Europe—and the superfluous thickness of paper is removed by a process of scraping until the design is visible; finally, the thin layer remaining is made transparent by the use of a little oil and the work of engraving begins. The borders of the outline

are first incised—very lightly in the more delicate parts—with a kind of knife, and the interspaces between the lines of the drawing are excavated by means of chisels and gouges of various shapes. The block is then washed and is ready for use. The printer applies the ink very

Fig. 32.—From an engraving after Sensai Yeitaku.

carefully with a brush, and the impressions are taken upon specially prepared paper by rubbing with a flat disc (*baren*) worked by hand pressure. Certain gradations of tone, and even polychromatic effects may be produced from a single block, and uninked blocks are often

used for the purpose of embossing portions of the design, as an aid to the effects of colour-printing. The latter resource is seen in the works of Nishimura Shigénaga, executed about 1730, and was perhaps employed at an earlier date.

The effect of printing from two or more blocks was obtained in some cases by preparing a single block with ink of different colours, or with different shades of the same colour. This appeared as early as 1740 in some landscapes in the *Gwako senran*, where the distance is represented by pale ink, against which the dark foreground stands out in bold relief; and in the *Sōshiséki gwa-fu* (1769–70) and the *Keisai so-gwa* (1832) (Figs. 26 and 27) chromatic effects are produced by similar means. Sky and water gradations are effected in like manner in colour-prints, the superfluity of colour being removed, where the lighter shade is required, by the simple process of wiping the inked block with a brush or cloth according to directions previously given by the engraver.

In the ordinary colour-prints the effects are obtained by the use of a number of additional blocks engraved in series from copies of the impression taken from the first or outline block. The correctness of register is secured by marking the angles of the original block outside the lines of the engraving with incisions made in a certain direction. The angles are printed off upon the sheet bearing the first outline, and are repeated in facsimile in the cutting of all the subsequent blocks, the corner marks left upon the paper after contact with block No. 1 thus being made to serve as a guide for the accurate apposition of the sheet upon each successive block, the printings being all effected by hand pressure. The process is simple, but the rarity of faults of register in Japanese chromoxylography proves that it is efficacious.

The technique of the Japanese woodcutter is interesting, partly in its analogy to that of the early woodcutters of Europe and partly as an example of the perfection that a skilful artisan can attain even with the simplest and cheapest appliances. An authoritative account of the details of the process and materials will be found in Audsley's *Ornamental Arts of Japan*, and more lately a valuable monograph, written by Mr. T. Tokuno, the chief of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing of the Ministry of Finance in Tokyo, has been printed by the Smithsonian Insti-

PLATE 6. FROM A COLOUR PRINT AFTER UTAGAWA TOYOKUNI (C. 1820).

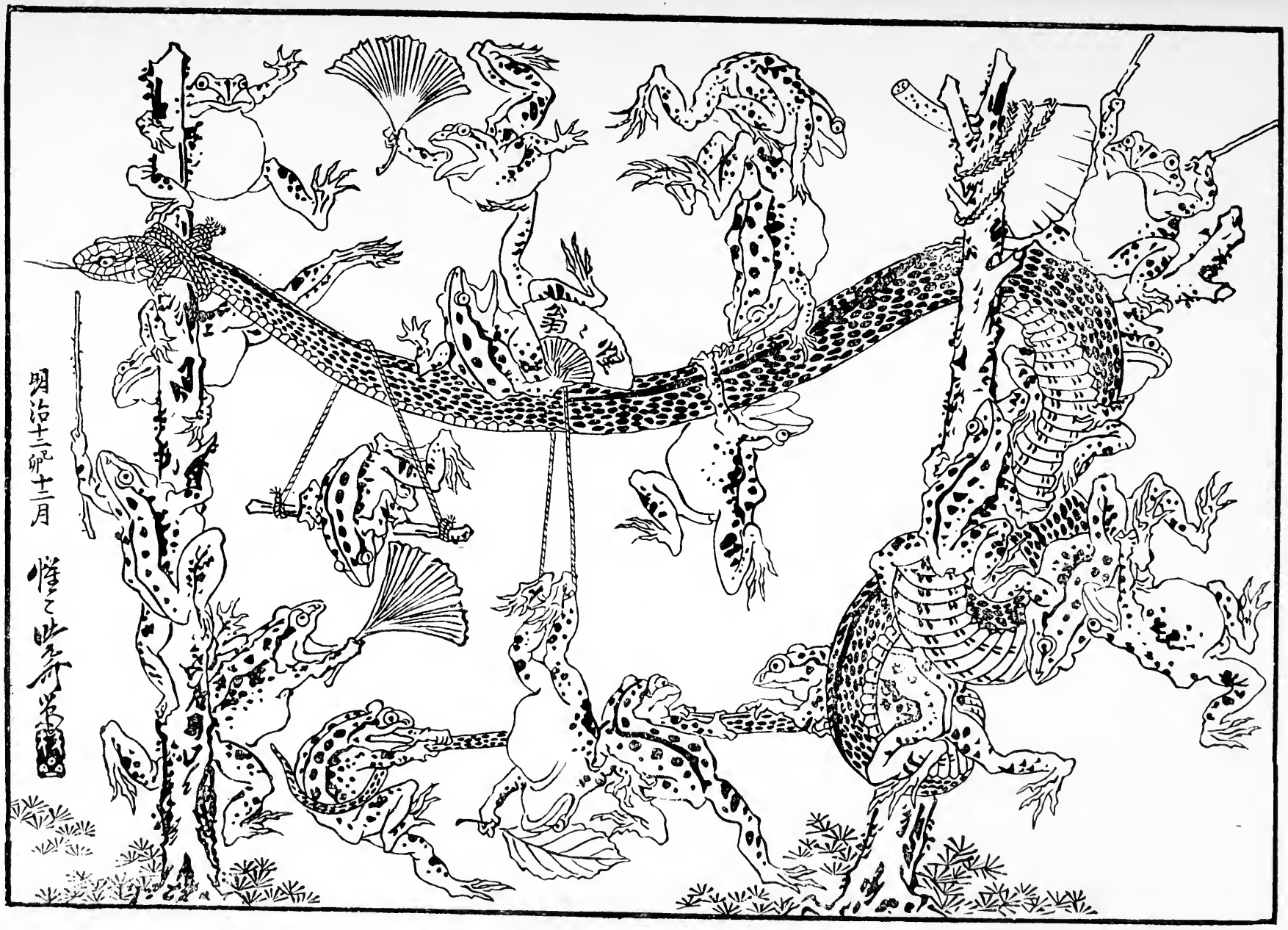


Fig. 33.—From an engraving after Kiosai. From the "Pictorial Arts of Japan."

tution, with a learned introduction and notes by Mr. S. R. Koehler.[1] It is chiefly from these sources that the following facts have been collated.

The Wood ordinarily employed is that of a variety of cherry, but *Tsugi*, a variety of *Buxus Japonicus;* or *Adsusa*, the *Katalpa Kæmpferi*, var. *Japonica*, may be used instead. The planks, when planed, are about three-quarters of an inch thick, and in order to prevent them from warping or cracking they are sometimes strengthened by cross pieces attached to each end, unless the wood is thoroughly seasoned.

The Tools.—(1) A single *knife*, with which the engraver executes all kinds of work, with a blade of an inch to an inch and a half in length, and in shape not unlike a penknife, but more deeply cut near the point. The blade is fixed in a round wooden handle about three inches long.

(2) *Chisels* and *gouges* of various shapes, some to supplement the knife and used in the same manner, others to remove unsatisfactory parts for plugging. Five chisels and eight gouges form the usual outfit (Fig. 35).

(3) A *ruler* for cutting straight lines and for fixing the registering marks in the planks used in colour-printing (Fig. 35, No. 1).

(4) A *brush* for clearing away the chips detached by the cutting tools, shaped somewhat like a nailbrush (Fig. 35, No. 17).

(5) Wooden *mallets* for driving the chisels.

(6) *Grind stones* for the cutting tools.

Oil of Sesamum Orientale is used to rub into the plank to be engraved, and so to make the cutting easier and cleaner.

In his manipulation the woodcutter holds the knife in his right hand, and pushing the back of it with the middle finger of his left hand, first cuts around all the lines of the design, following the direction of the original brush strokes. He next removes the wood between the lines by the chisels, so as to leave the lines themselves in relief. The surface is then cleaned and washed by a small brush, and a proof is taken. Mr. Koehler points out that the method of holding the tool represented in Jost Amman's *Beschreibung aller Stände*, published in Frankfort in 1568, corresponds closely to that of the Japanese engraver, except that the European does not seem to have used his left hand in guiding the tool.

[1] *Japanese Wood Cutting and Woodcut Printing*, by T. Tokuno, edited by S. R Kochler. Washington, 1894.

The materials used in printing are equally simple.

Paper.—Bibulous paper of various qualities and degrees of thickness is chiefly made from the *Broussonetia papyrifera.* The sheets are moistened with water before the printing begins, the amount of fluid employed varying with the quality of the paper. A single wet sheet is put between every three or four dry sheets until a suitable layer is formed, and this is then pressed between two wooden press boards until the whole has a uniform and proper degree of moisture. This can only be adjusted by care and experience, and it is essential to the success of the print, since the water colours used for printing tend to spread in the absorbent paper, and a small excess of moisture would inevitably ruin the impression. The sheet is printed on one side, and the leaf is made by folding, so that each leaf is double.

In *éditions de luxe* a very thick soft paper is employed, but in ordinary volumes it is much thinner, often so thin that the design on the other side of the folded sheet is more or less visible. In one volume (dating back to about 1700) in the British Museum Collection, the illustrations are printed on both sides of a heavily enamelled sheet. This is perhaps unique in Japanese printing. For colour-printing the paper is specially prepared by treatment with *dosa*, a kind of size, to prevent the tints from spreading.

Silk is occasionally, but rarely, used in place of paper.

Colours.—These were almost identical with the colours used by the painter, and were mixed with water and rice paste. Many were of native origin, others were imported from China, and in later years the European market has been utilised with disastrous results.

Black is Japanese ink. In the older prints this was commonly of a somewhat grayish tint; but a deep black was used by Toyokuni in his latest period, and appears in many of the modern broadsides. A black prepared from soot of pine-wood was also used in cheap prints.

White.—*To no tsuchi*, a carbonate of lead prepared in Japan. It is not often used alone, as it is apt to blacken on exposure. *Gofun* is a kind of white made by powdering calcined oyster shells.

Red.—There are many kinds of reds used by the printers. (1) *Béni*, a very pale pink, extracted from a kind of safflower called *kijomé.* It is said to have been the earliest colour print used in the

Fig. 34.—From an engraving by Sensai Yeitaku in the "Bambutsu kinagata gwa-fu," 1878.

"*béni yé*" of Idzumiya Gonshiro in 1695; (2) *Shoyenji*, a pink dye imported from China, supposed to be cochineal. It is the principal red in the prints of the best period; (3) *Shido* or *benigara*, red oxide of iron, prepared from a native ore; (4) *Tan*, red oxide of lead, seen in

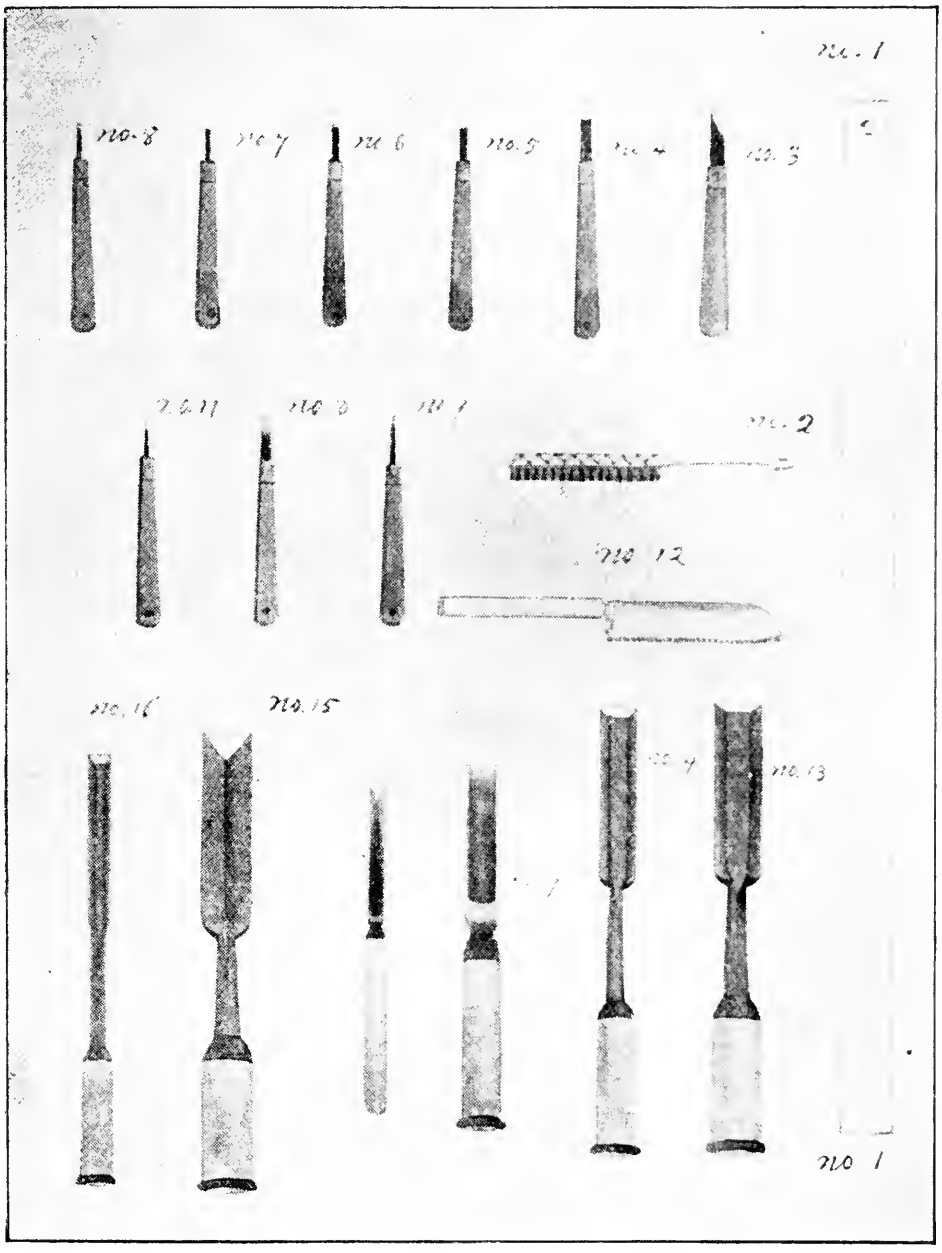


Fig. 35.—The Tools of the Engraver. From "Japanese Woodcutting," by T. Tokuno.

many prints of the last century: it tends to blacken on exposure; (5) *Shiu*, vermilion, originally imported from China; (6) *Yodo*, a cheap carmine imported from Europe, and much used during the last fifty years.

Yellow.—In the old prints orpiment and yellow ochre (*Sekiwo* and *Odo*) prepared from native earths, but more recently imported orpiment and gamboge have been employed. *Shido*, a brownish ochre, made from a native earth, is also used.

Blue.—Blue carbonate of copper (*konjo*) made from a native earth, and indigo (*airo*) prepared from the *polygonum tinctorium* were used in the older prints; but the modern printers have largely adopted an imported Prussian blue (*bero-ai*).

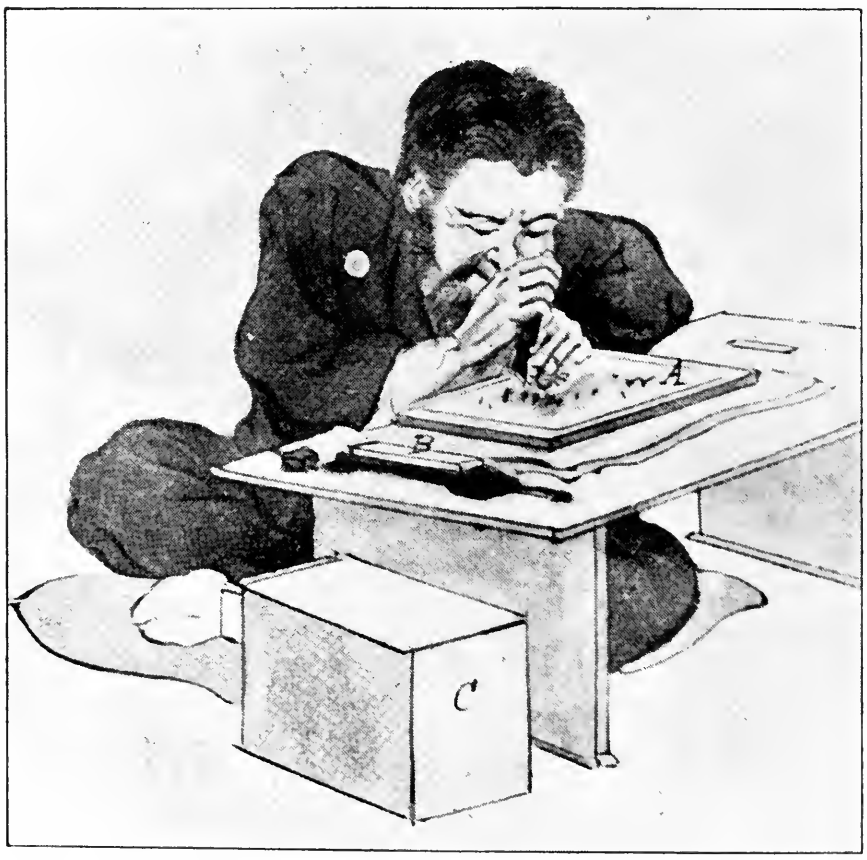


Fig. 36.—The Engraver at Work. From "Japanese Woodcutting," by T. Tokuno.

Green.—Made from aceto-arsenite of copper (*rokusho*), or by admixture of blue and yellow.

Purple.—An admixture of red and blue. First seen in the later prints of Toyokuni.

Rice paste, employed as a medium and to give lustre. It is prepared with much care.

Size Solution prepared from gelatine extracted from oxhide by boiling, and mixed with a proportion (1 to 3) of powdered alum.

Mother of Pearl Powder, *Dutch Metal*, and *Copper*, *Silver*, and *Gold Leaf* are occasionally met with. The copper and Dutch metal are most commonly found in broadsides of the Osaka school ; the silver and gold leaf on the New Year cards of the present century.

THE TOOLS OF THE PRINTER were as simple and inexpensive as those of the engraver, but the clever fingers and careful habits almost characteristic of the race enabled the men to secure results that could hardly be excelled. All that was required were boards for pressing the wet paper, a printing table, two sets of brushes for charging the cut planks with the printing colours and for wetting the paper, a rubber or *baren*, knife and chisels to correct the register marks if necessary, an agitator for mixing the colours in a cup, and pads of cloth to be placed under the four corners of the block while printing.

The Baren, or rubber, is a little shield which replaces the European press, and is used to rub the sheet laid upon the inked block so as to take the impressions. It is made of twisted paper rolled spirally into the form of a circular mat having several layers of paper pasted on its under side to make it smooth and durable, and over these is strained a piece of the dried sheath of a bamboo sprout. The face of the baren is occasionally rubbed with oil of *Sesamum orientale* in order to make it glide smoothly ; but if, as rarely happens, too much is used, a greasy mark is left on the reverse side of the paper. No press is required, but the block is laid on a board, the further end of which is slightly elevated, with its corners resting on four small damp cotton cloth cushions to prevent it from slipping. These are placed on the floor mats on which the printer sits.

Summary.

It has been shown that the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese led the way centuries before the European wood-engraver came into existence, but that the higher development of the Turanian section of the art belongs to Japan and dates only from the later part of the seventeenth century.

It may seem strange that in an historical review of Japanese engraving so little reference has been made to the engraver himself. The reason of this is that the wood-cutter's personality is so completely lost in that of the artist that, although we know the names of the engravers attached to most of the book illustrations of the fourth and later periods, it is scarcely possible to differentiate between the work of one member of the craft and that of another. The business of the wood-cutter was to follow exactly the brush line of the artist, and so conscientiously did he acquit himself that a proof from the wood block could scarcely have been distinguished from the original drawing ; but he had only to define outlines and never to interpret in black and white the subtle effects of colour, atmosphere, and light and shade, and there is nothing to be said of him save that he was a clever and painstaking workman, who has ably accomplished a most delicate task and has rendered an invaluable service to the cause of art. To compare him with the European wood-cutter of the present century it may be said that the latter, to win distinction in his calling, must be an artist as well as an engraver, while his Japanese fellow worker required only the qualities of dexterity and patience, and was simply a highly-skilled craftsman. When he had isolated the sweeping strokes of the painter's brush his work was done, and the rest was left to the printer.

On the other hand, while the functions of the European printer of wood engravings demand little more than the ordinary training of a skilled mechanic, the Japanese printer was called upon to take an important share in the consummation. It was he who carried out the artist's scheme of colour, and many of the effects of gradation in chromoxylography, and occasionally even in black and white, could only be attained by an intelligent sympathy between the artist and himself. Every lover of Japanese woodcuts will recognise that much

of the charm of the more prized impressions has been contributed by the artistic feeling of the printer after the designer and engraver had done their work.

If we are to judge Japanese engraving by the effects produced, it is hard to assign its due place in the xylographic art of the world, on account of the imperfect evolution of the art it seeks to express. The Japanese painter clings to many a useless convention that has no

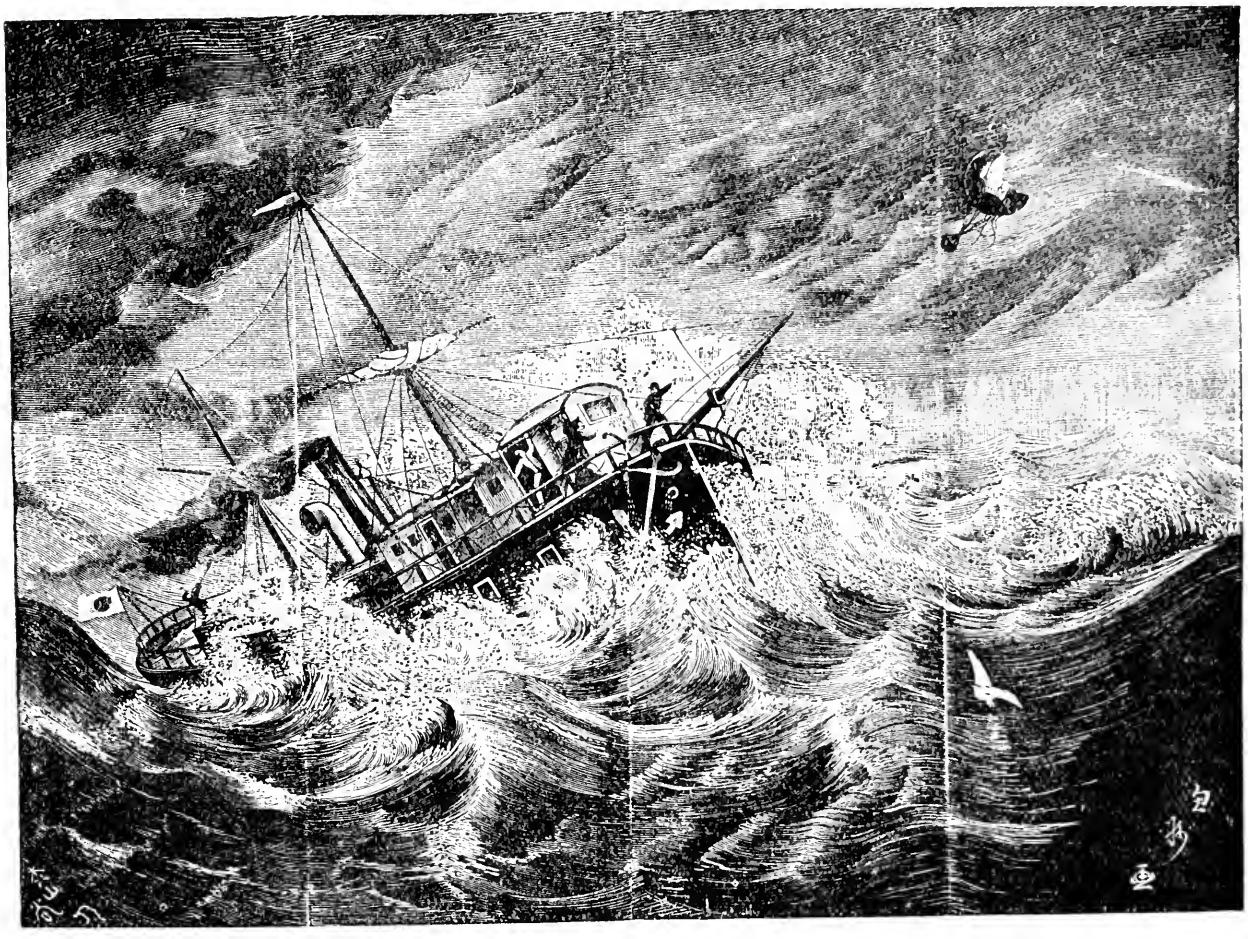
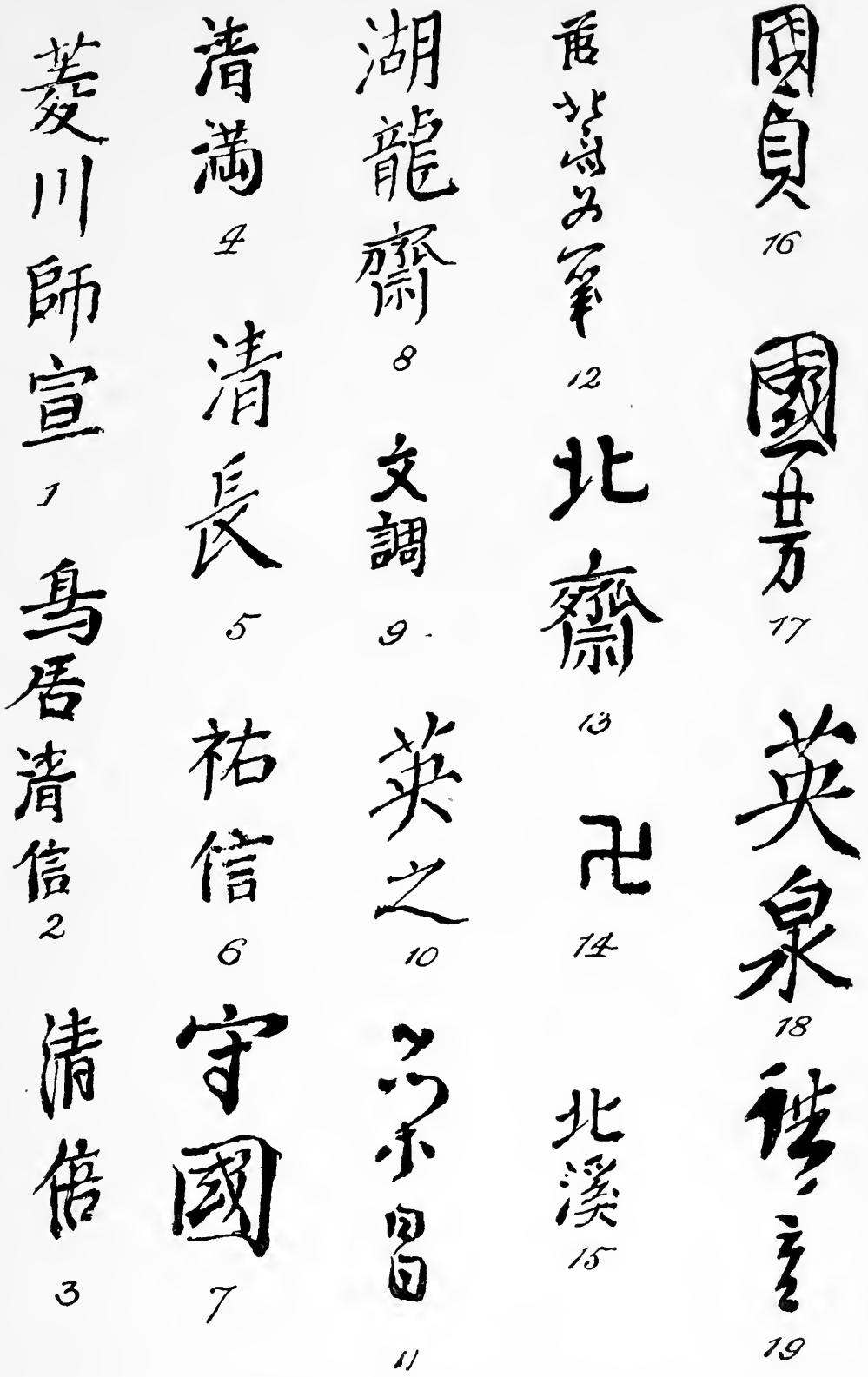


Fig. 37.—Reduced from a woodcut in the European style, published in the Myako no hana (1888).

foundation in nature. The objects in his picture must show neither shadows, projected or otherwise, nor high lights; his night-scene has no darkness; the water of his lake or river neither reflects nor refracts; the features of his men and women must conform to a set type; the limbs of man or horse are indicated by lines that caricature the forms of anatomy; and his perspective is inconsistent with optical laws. All

these defects in the principles of the painter's art must necessarily influence the character of the engraver's transcript and render the problem of comparison difficult and unprofitable. It must be enough to say that Japanese wood-cuts are distinguished by clearness and decision of line and a remarkably decorative use of masses of black, and in chromoxylography by a colour-harmony that we have yet to equal. Like the work of the artist in lacquer and metal, the finished engraving demonstrates that infinite capacity for taking pains which is so strong a feature of the national character. But when the workman quits his own models and attempts to engrave in the European manner, as in Fig. 37, he imitates with little skill or sympathy. For a new departure he requires a new education, and before he can acquire it the grand old art of the wood-cutter will have passed away.

It is a dismal conclusion to predict the extinction of an art industry to which Japan has owed so much, but the end is inevitable. The introduction of movable metallic types has been the first stroke of fate, for Chinese and Japanese engraving began with the carving-out of the elaborate characters that make up the script of the two nations, and ideographic symbols and pictorial illustrations have held together in close companionship nearly down to the present day; but the glorious old block-books that were enriched by the genius of Moronobu, Sukénobu, Morikuni, and Hokusai have now been replaced by type-printed volumes, on European or Europeanised paper, and illustrated by pictures engraved by the newest photographic processes. The engravers still find some work in chromoxylographic broadsides, and since the outbreak of the great war a market such as they never had before; but even this must end before the march of science and utilitarianism. A time will soon come when the engravings that bear the honoured names set forth in this history will be sought as eagerly by the art collector of Japan as the etchings of Rembrandt and Dürer by ourselves, and the Japanese historian of the twentieth century will regard the illustrated books and broadsides that will be jealously treasured in the Nipponese museum of the future as his best *mémoires pour servir* in recording the folk-lore, customs, and habits of thoughts of his people in the generations that preceded the era of the compositor and the photographic process-blocks.



REPRODUCTION OF SIGNATURES.

1. Hishigawa Moronobu.
2. (Torii) Kiyonobu.
3. (Torii) Kiyomasu.
4. (Torii) Kiyomitsu.
5. (Torii) Kiyonaga.
6. (Nishigawa) Sukenobu.
7. (Tachibana) Morikuni.
8. Koriusai.
9. (Ippitsusai) Buncho.
10, 11. (Hosoï) Yeishi.
12, 13. Hokusai.
14. Manji (Hokusai).
15. Hokkei.
16. (Utagawa) Kunisada.
17. (Utagawa) Kuniyoshi.
18. (Keisai) Yeisen.
19. Hiroshigé.

For Nishimura Shigenaga, Suzuki Harunobu, Shunshō, Shunchō, Utamaro, and Toyokuni, see Plates I—VI.

For Okumura Masanobu see Fig. 7, p. 18. For Kiosai, see Fig. 33, p. 65.

The names by which the later popular artists are known are nearly all patronymics or *noms de guerre*, adopted in compliment to their teachers. For example, Kondo Jiubei, on entering the school of Utagawa Ichiriusai Toyohiro, thenceforth signed himself Utagawa Hiroshigé; Ichiriusai Hiroshigé, or Hiroshigé (the final name is always that by which the person is familiarly designated). As a rule the artist adopts the second character of his teacher's name, and adds to this another which he in turn transmits to his followers, but sometimes the first is chosen. Thus, the pupils of Toyokuni are Kunisada, Kuniyoshi, &c.; those of Kunisada are Sadatora, Sadamasu, &c.; those of Hokusai are Hokuba, Isai, &c. More rarely the whole name is taken, either during the life and with the consent of the original owner, as when Hokusai gave his name of Saito to Endo Hanyémon, who became Saito the Second—or after his death, as in the case of Kunisada, who in 1844 adopted the signature of Toyokuni (died 1828) in place of his own.

Other names, again, are founded upon a local or personal allusion, as Hokuso Wō (Itchō), "the Ancient of the Northern Window"; Hokusai, "the Northern Studio"; Man Rojin, "the Ancient of a Hundred Centuries," &c. Of such designations the person may assume several in the course of a lifetime, throwing one aside in favour of another as often as caprice dictates a change, and much to the discomfiture of future collectors of his works.

SUMMARY OF PERIODS.

First Period.

Ninth century (?) to 1608. Chiefly portraitures of divinities, engraved in the Buddhist temples.

Second Period.

1608–1680. Early illustrated books, with roughly-cut pictures, sometimes hand-coloured, names of artists and engravers unknown.

Third Period.

1680–1710. Artistic albums—illustrated books—pictorial broadsides—panoramic views. Rudimentary chromoxylography.

Principal Artists—

Hishigawa Moronobu and his pupils. *Books.*

Okumura Masanobu (1700–1720). *Books and broadsides.*

Haségawa Tōün and Ishikawa Riusen. *Books.*

FOURTH PERIOD (1710–1828).

Artistically illustrated books of all kinds, especially copies of old pictures, and volumes for instruction of artisans. Chromoxylography in books and broadsides. The second half of this term, from 1765–1828, is the best period of chromoxylography.

Principal Artists—

Tachibana Morikuni (1670–1748), Nishikawa Sukénobu (1678–1750 ?), Oöka Shunboku (d. about 1755, æt. 84), Sakurai Shiuzan, Tsukioka Tangé (1717–1786). *Book illustrations of various kinds*, from 1710–1765.

Torii Kiyonobu, Okumura Masanobu, Torii Kiyomasu, Torii Kiyotada, Torii Kiyoshigé. *Books, theatrical, chromoxylographic broadsides.*

Torii Kiyomitsu, Torii Kiyonaga, Torii Kiyotsuné, Tomikawa Ginsetsu. *Chromoxylographic broadsides, illustrations to novelettes, &c.*, 1750–1765.

Nishimura Shigénaga, Ishikawa Toyonobu, Ishikawa Toyomasa. *Chromoxylographic broadsides*, 1730–1765.

Katsugawa Shunshō (d. 1792) and his pupils, Shunkō, Shunyei, and others, Ippitsusai Buncho. *Theatrical and other broadsides, chromoxylographic books*, 1770–1790.

Katsugawa Shuncho, Suzuki Harunobu, Koriusai (Isoda Shobei), Torii Kiyominé, Kikugawa Yeizan, Kitawo Kosuisai Shigémasa, Tsubo Toshimitsu or Shunman, Toriyama Sekiyen Toyofusa. *Chromoxylographic broadsides, chiefly portraits of women—books*, 1770–1790.

Hosoï Chobunsai Yeishi, Kitawo Masanobu (Kioden), Kitawo Masayoshi, Kitagawa Utamaro, Utagawa Toyoharu (d. about 1810), Yeizan. *Chromoxylographic broadsides, chiefly portraits of women—books*, 1790–1810.

Katsushika Hokusai (Shunro, Sori, Saito, &c.), (1760–1849). *Chiefly books and New Year's cards*, from 1790.

Takéhara Shunchosai, Nishimura Chiūwa, Hokkio Nishikuni, Niwa Tokei, Hazamidzu Shunkiosai, Shitomi Kwangetsu. *Books, chiefly topographical*, 1780–1800.

Shimokawabé Jiusui. *Books, chiefly stories*, 1765–90. Ishida Giokuzan. *Books*, 1795–1806.

Shiba Gōkan (1747–1818). *Books, with illustrations in perspective*, 1780–1800.

Utagawa Toyohiro (d. 1828), Utagawa Toyokuni, 1772–1828. *New Year's cards, theatrical and other chromoxylographic single sheets, books, &c.* 1800–1828.

Utagawa Kunisada (1787–1865), Utagawa Kuniyasu, Arisaka Teisai Hokuba, Shinsai, Uwoya Hokkei, Katsugawa Shunsen, Katsugawa Shuntei, Katsugawa Shunwō, *New Year's cards, chromoxylographic broadsides, books, &c.*, from 1810.

Tani Bunchō (1763–1830). *Landscape illustrations, &c.*

Hōitsu (1761–1828). *Albums of designs after Kōrin and in the style of the Kōrin school.*

Chō Gesshō. *Chromoxylographic albums*, 1810–1825.

Mori Shunkei. *Chromoxylographs, chiefly from Chinese sources*, 1810–1825.

Aikawatei Minwa. *Copies of pictures*, 1810–1825.

Fifth Period (1829–1849).

Signalised by the later works of Hokusai, the topographical handbooks of Settan, and the landscapes of Hiroshigé. Decline of chromoxylography.

Principal Artists—

Katsushika Hokusai. *Albums of miscellaneous sketches, &c.*

Keisai Yeisen, Giokuransai Sadahidé, Yanagawa Shigénobu, and Ōishi Matora (1787–1842). *Chromoxylographic broadsides (non-theatrical), books*, 1825–1840.

Haségawa Settan, Haségawa Settei. *Topographical handbooks*, 1830–1840.

Otagiri Tadachika, Matsugawa Hanzan Yasunobu, Yashima Sadaoka, Yoyen Yoshitada, *Topographical handbooks*, 1840–1860.

Hiroshigé (Kondo Jiubei) (1797–1858). *Chromoxylographic broadsides, chiefly landscape; books.*

Utagawa Kunisada, Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1800–1861). *Chromoxylographic broadsides, books.*

Hokushiu, Hokuyei, Hokucho, Sadamasu, Sadahiro. (Osaka School.) *Theatrical chromoxylographs* (1840–1860).

Kikuchi Yōsai (1787–1878). *Portraits of ancient celebrities.*

Hokujiu, Hokuto, Hokuba, Hokuün, Shinsai, Yanagawa Shigémasa, Numata Gessai (1787–1864), followers of Hokusai. *Books*, 1825–1860.

Sixth Period (1849 to Present Day).

Continued decline of single sheet chromoxylography. Decline of original book illustrations. Book illustrations in imitation of "European" manner.

Principal Artists—

Katsushika Isai. *Albums and illustrated books in the style of Hokusai.*

Kawanabé Kiōsai (born 1831, d. 1890). *Albums of various kinds, chiefly comic*, from 1860.

Sensai Yeitaku. *Albums and book illustrations*, from 1878.

Bairei. *Albums of birds and flowers*, from 1880.

Gekko. *Chromoxylographic broadsides*, recent.

The seven leaders in the development of Japanese wood engraving are Hishigawa Moronobu, Torii Kiyonobu, Tachibana Morikuni, Nishigawa Sukénobu, Katsugawa Shunshō, Utagawa Toyokuni, and Hokusai.

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MAR 1 3 1986	APR 0 6 2009		
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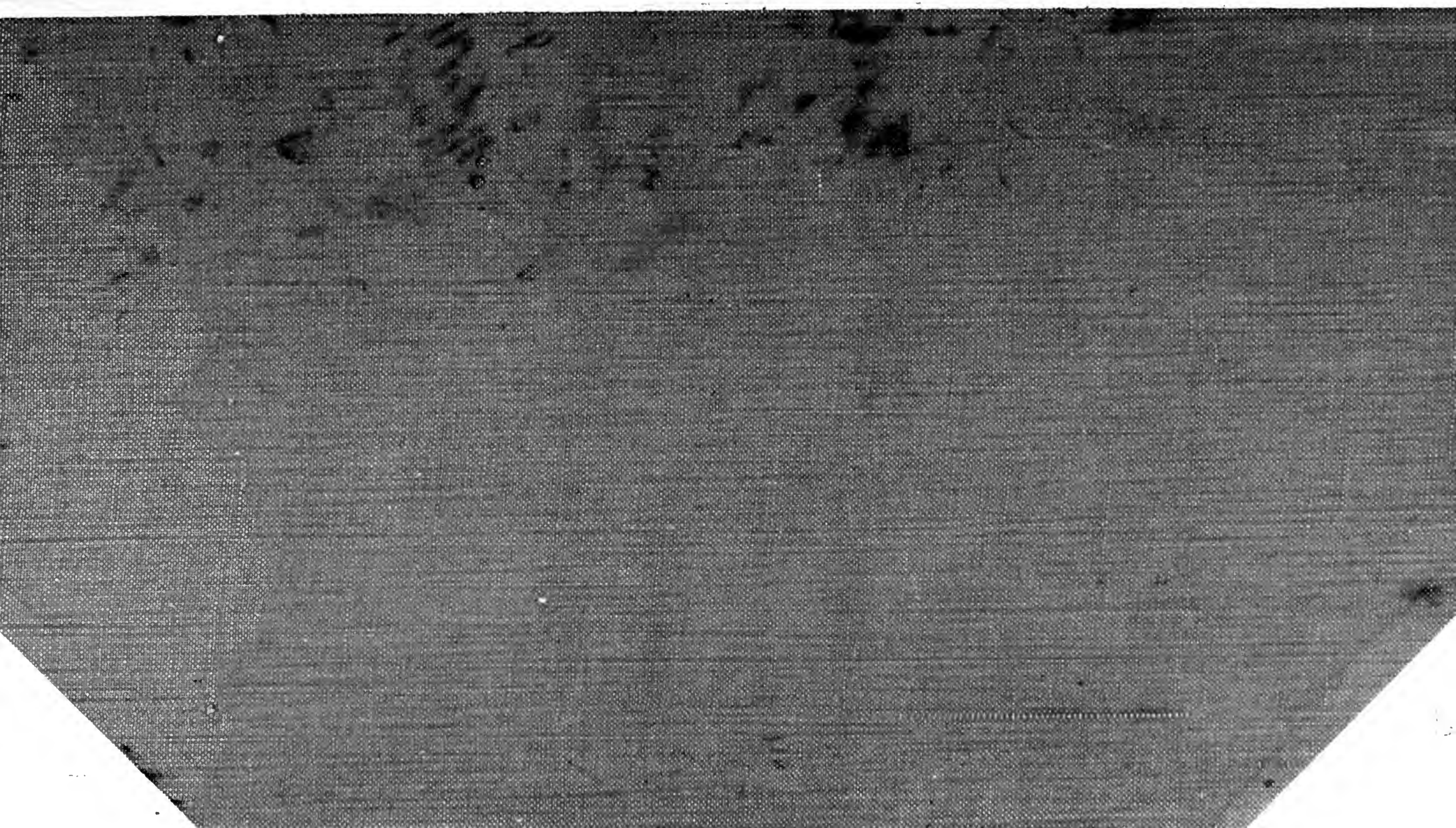
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